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December 2013
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Step-by-step guide»
Make our gingerbread house

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Gifts galore for gourmands

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Head to Prague for a White Christmas

FREE RECIPE SUPPLEMENT



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PUBLISHER Dominic De Sousa
GROUP COO Nadeem Hood

ASSOCIATE PUBLISHERS
Carol Owen
Georgina Wilson-Powell

EDITORIAL
EDITOR: Sudeshna Ghosh
sudeshna.ghosh@cpimediagroup.com
ASSISTANT EDITOR: Nicola Monteath
nicola.monteath@cpimediagroup.com
SENIOR DESIGNER: Odilaine Salalac-Mejorada
PHOTOGRAPHER: Anas Cherur

ADVERTISING
ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER: Carol Owen
carol.owen@cpimediagroup.com
SALES DIRECTOR: Lauren Wing
lauren.wing@cpimediagroup.com /+971 55 6079507

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS
Marizel Salvador
marizel.salvador@cpimediagroup.com

ONLINE
Louie Alma

PRODUCTION
Devaprakash

DISTRIBUTION
Rochelle Almeida
rochelle.almeida@cpimediagroup.com

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DIRECTOR OF PUBLISHING: Nicholas Brett
HEAD OF PUBLISHING: Chris Kerwin
HEAD OF EDITORIAL: Jenny Potter
PUBLISHING COORDINATOR: Eva Abramik

Immediate Media Co.
CHAIRMAN: Stephen Alexander
DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Peter Phippen
CEO: Tom Bureau
HEAD OF LICENSING AND SYNDICATION: Joanna Marshall
INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS MANAGER: Aleksandra Nowacka

UK Good Food Team
EDITOR: Gillian Carter
CREATIVE DIRECTOR FOOD GROUP: Elizabeth Galbraith
FOOD DIRECTOR FOOD GROUP: Lulu Grimes
PUBLISHING DIRECTOR: Alfie Lewis

Editor's photograph shot at PINK PEPPER PHOTOGRAPHY | Makeup by CLARINS

Welcome!



There's an unmistakable sense of festivity in the air at the moment – irrespective of what race, religion or nationality you belong to. The city event calendar is bursting at the seams, the festive party invitations are flooding in, and of course, your own entertaining-at-home schedule is likely filling up fast.

With the silly season well and truly upon us, you need to read this issue to navigate your way through it in effortless style! Christmas *always* gets us excited, and this year is no different. We've got over 20 pages worth of Christmas cooking inspiration inside – whether you want to give traditional dishes a twist, from turkey to a Middle East-inspired pudding, (*The perfect Christmas menu*, p46), or want to try something completely different, yet equally festive, like duck this year (*A taste of nostalgia*, p62). We've also got a buffet menu from celebrity chef John Torode that will be perfect for more casual gatherings (*John Torode's buffet for a crowd*, p56), and being our ever-practical selves, we also share smart ways to make use of the inevitable leftovers from big Christmas dinners (*Love your leftovers*, p67). One of these leftover dishes is sure to be the star attraction if you decide to host a Boxing day brunch, turn to p12 to find this month's *Menu Planner* that lets you mix and match recipes from across the issue, to rustle up the perfect meal for any occasion.

In order to help you plan the perfect Christmas, we've also compiled some seriously covetable products in *The 2013 festive gift guide*, for the foodies in your life, p26. And when you want to make a gift that little bit extra special, why not give a handmade goodie? On p78, we show you how to make your own macarons – becoming a domestic goddess is easier than you think!

In fact, domestic goddess-dom is exactly what was on our minds when we asked some of the region's experts on entertaining what their advice for throwing a stylish party was – find their top tips in *How to be the perfect party host*, on p86. We also turned to the experts to find out how the festive season can be not just fun for you, but healthy too – read up on all the nutritional advice you need in *Your essential party survival guide* on p91.

However you end up celebrating this season (if you're craving a White Christmas, you can also plan a trip to Prague after reading our travel feature on p110), make sure you're surrounded by love, good cheer and of course, lots of good food.

See you in the New Year!

Sudeshna

Editor's picks



I've got this gorgeous Vera Wang dinner set on my gift list! p26



The Chilean Tamaya juices taste like fresh fruit in a bottle – delicious! p41



I'm going to give this D-I-Y wreath a go this festive season, p87



BBC GoodFood MIDDLE EAST

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BBC GoodFood MIDDLE EAST

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Our recipe descriptions

V Suitable for vegetarians
❄ You can freeze it
Not suitable for freezing
Easy Simple recipes even beginners can make
A little effort These require a bit more skill and confidence – such as making pastry
More of a challenge Recipes aimed at experienced cooks
Low fat 12g or less per portion
Low cal 500 calories or less per main.
Superhealthy Low in saturated fat, 5g or less per portion; low in salt, 1.5g or less; and at least one of the following: provides one-third or more of your daily requirement of fibre, iron, calcium, folic acid and/or vitamin C, or counts at least one portion of your recommended 5-a-day fruit and veg.
Good for you Low in saturated fat, low in salt.
Heart healthy Low in saturated fat, with 5g or less, and low in salt, with 1.5g or less, and high in omega-3 fatty acids
1 of 5-a-day The number of portions of fruit and/or veg contained in a serving
Vit C **Iron** **Omega-3** **Calcium** **Folate** **Fibre**
Indicating recipes that are good sources of useful nutrients

Some recipes contain pork & alcohol. These are clearly marked and are for non-Muslims only. Look for these symbols:
P Contains pork
Contains alcohol

Store Directory

Contact numbers for outlets featured in this issue

Ace: 04-3411906
Bloomingdale's-Dubai: 04-3505333
2XL Furniture: 04-2888071
Crate and Barrel: 04-3990125
Ethan Allen: 04-3308871
Harvest Home: 04-3420225
Harvey Nichols Dubai: 04-4098888
Homes R Us: 04-4469820
Ikea: 04-2037555/02-4935888
Indigo Living: 04-3466934
Jashanmal stores: 04-3471715
Lakeland: 04-3236081
Sauce Gifts: 04-3883488
Tavola: 04-3402933
Villeroy and Boch: 04-3399676
TWG Tea Salon and Boutique: 04-3253857

Note: Prices in Qatari Riyals are usually the same as UAE Dirhams.

Your say

We love to hear from you!

A GOOD READ



After reading the restaurant reviews in your magazine, I was quite motivated to head out and try them. I like the magazine as the recipes are all thoroughly explained, easy to make, and have beautiful photos which make you salivate!
Sofia Sabljarevic

BODY AND SOUL FOOD

This is my first time writing into any magazine, but I guess it's time, courtesy of my current state of despair. I have just embarked on a healthy diet which to me seems supposedly only healthy for my body and not my mind. Eating the greens and unsaturated fats, while leaving me lighter, also leaves me cheerless, subdued and craving for yummy, junk food – which was a major part of my diet before, and might I add, made me enthusiastic too. That's where I would like the great *BBC Good Food ME* to come to the rescue. I would love if you could publish a feature on healthy junk food (if there is anything of the sort!), which could include meals and snacks that are healthy yet contain some element of 'junky-ness' and excitement, rather than leaving me feeling deprived and waiting to jump off the diet.
Linda Ferrao

EDITOR'S NOTE:
Look out for lots of delicious ideas for healthy cooking in our January issue!

Win!

The writer of the Star Letter wins a **Dhs1,000 shopping voucher from Crate and Barrel**. The 50-year old American brand is known for its exquisite selection of homeware products, essential kitchen items, outdoor and indoor furniture and everything else you can ever want for your décor. The collections are suitable for modern and traditional homes alike and are updated every season. There's really no better destination when it comes to cosy, chic and stylish furniture and home accessories. Crate and Barrel stores are located in Mall of the Emirates and Mirdiff City Centre, Dubai.



Star Letter

PERFECT TIMING

With the weather finally turning pleasant, I decided it was time to plan barbecues and picnic lunches with family and friends. I was pleasantly surprised when I found plenty of recipe ideas for outdoor eating in the November issue. I tried the chicken tikka burgers (*New flames*, November 2013) and must say my boys loved them! The recipes from *Pack a posh picnic* look so enticing and easy to make, but are also quite unique compared to standard picnic fare. Can't wait for the weekend to arrive to try more recipes. Thank you so much for anticipating the needs of your readers so accurately and bringing out such a fabulous issue. Continue the good work!
Anna Thomas



PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS



I read through my first issue of *BBC Good Food ME* magazine – my wife has been suggesting I do so for a long time! I finally caved into the pressure and thought it was well worth the read. The recipes are practical, and the fusion flavours in this month's edition can all be made with ingredients in the storecupboard. The October issue also really addressed a question I'd never received an answer for – "which oils to use for which types of cooking?" (*Oil's well*, October 2013). With so many choices these days, from almond, corn to walnut, using the wrong oil is all too easy! Thank you for informing us about this! I think you've found yourself a new reader.
Scott Richards

TALK TO US!

Email us on feedback@bbcgoodfoodme.com with your thoughts, views and comments.

You can also connect with us on social media! Find us on:

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Or, you could write to us at:
The Editor
BBC Good Food Middle East.
Dubai Media City, Building 4, Office G08
PO Box 13700, Dubai, UAE.

From our social media pages

- Yay! Feature in *BBC Good Food ME* on my favourite chef, Vineet Bhatia. Would love to try the Blueberry phirni log recipe – *Saloni Jolly-Banga*
- Just got the magazine delivered to my office desk! #droolingatwork #deliciousness – *Karen Beggs*.
- A big Thank you to BBC Good Food ME @ChefRus and all the staff at #Gallerieslafayette & #EmiratesNBD for a great afternoon #Cookingwithkids. – *Sarah Alleaby*

Clarification: In the 'What's your beef?' feature in the November issue, the statement on health benefits of organic beef, which was credited to Dima Sharif, was based on research, and was not a personal opinion.

Compiled by NICOLA MONTEATH | Photographs: SUPPLIED, PHOTOS.COM

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In appreciation and recognition for their Highness' wise guidance that has had a profound impact on the success of the Dubai World Hospitality Championship as well as promoting the hospitality sector in the United Arab Emirates.

Za'abeel Palace Hospitality would also like to extend its sincere thanks to all the people who contributed to the success of the championship that was held at the Dubai World Trade Centre from 16 - 18 November, 2013.

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Foodie file

What's hot and happening in the culinary world, here and around the globe.


Izel

DINE IN THE CITY

✳ We're delighted that California's popular pizza chain, zpizza, has opened at Park Island, Dubai Marina. The menu includes Napoli, Mexican, Californian and Tuscan pizzas, as well as, delicious gourmet combinations with cremini and shiitake mushrooms, caramelised onions and truffle oil which are available with gluten-free crust and vegan cheese options. Call 04-3649292.

✳ Salero Tapas and Bodega at Kempinski Hotel Mall of the Emirates, is the latest Spanish hotspot to launch in the city. Diners can enjoy small sharing plates of typical tapas items such as spicy patatas bravas, paella, and fresh seafood, while enjoying cocktails and viewing works of art from all over Spain. Call 04-4095999.

✳ Izel, the Latin American concept at Conrad Dubai is the place to head to, to enjoy a night of Mai Tai and Mint Julep cocktails while dancing to Latino beats or sitting out on the large terrace. The supper club serves a lounge and dinner menu which includes bites such as salted cod fritters and slow-cooked Argentinean beef – which is on display cooking in a spit in the lounge. Call 04-4447111.

✳ Qbara, the latest Middle Eastern eatery launched at the Wafi Fort complex serves traditional dishes from Levant, Eastern Mediterranean region and North Africa. Head there to try delicacies like duck breast with pomegranate molasses, walnuts and cinnamon, or chicken tagine with preserved lemon and apricots. Call 04-7092500.

Cook up a festive feast

Prepare to become the host with the most by signing up for one of these Christmas cooking classes:

❄ **Take the kids to a cooking class at Lafayette Gourmet on December 14 and let them bake mince pies, make Christmas cookies and decorate gingerbread houses. Adults can also learn how to put together the perfect Christmas table and learn food styling tricks at The Christmas Set up class on December 9 and 10. Dhs145 per child and adult, call 04-3399933.**

❄ **Scafa, School of Culinary and Finishing Arts, will be hosting a Christmas special cooking class for adults on December 23, where you could learn how to prepare a three-course meal including pumpkin soup, beef wellington with trimmings and a yule log, and then try the dishes too. Kids can also get to cook, and pick up culinary etiquette lessons at the Mini Master Chef and Children's event on December 21. Adult classes cost Dhs500 for two, Dhs225 for kids' event, call 04-3794044.**



Dinner in a box

Haven't got time to shop and cook healthy meals for the family? Cook-a-box is just what you need! All you have to do is choose a selection of nutritious recipes from cookabox.com, which features a list of ingredients, portion sizes, and nutritional information, and a picture of the dish to entice you, and they will deliver the ingredients with the recipe for your chosen dish right to your doorstep. All dishes can be cooked and prepared in under 30 minutes, and are gourmet enough to impress a special someone on a dinner date. Prices start from Dhs50 per dish.

A CUP OF SEASONAL CHEER

We love this time of year when all the leading cafés release their festive flavours. Caffe Nero has recently launched a Roasted chestnut, and praline latte, as well as a Middle Eastern exclusive, Chocolate and hazelnut frappe crème – a coffee-free ice drink. Starbucks have also launched a brand new gingerbread latte for this season – so, go on, make your morning coffee a festive one this month!

Compiled by NICOLA MONTEATH | Photographs SUPPLIED, PHOTOS.COM.

NOT SO SWEET NEWS!

Looking for low-calorie options for your coffees and sandwich? Icons Coffee Couture at Souk Al Bahar, the recently opened no-sugar-added coffee chain founded by German model Elena Weber, has the perfect 'Couture' menu for you to indulge in guilt-free. Try the hazelnut choco fudge latte made with stevia, a 200-calorie snow white espresso frappe, or one of the the most expensive coffees in the world – the Icons Kopi Luwak. Tempting treats such as a hazelnut cakes with lemon filling, raspberry chocolate cupcake in a jar and sesame chicken power sandwich are also available.

WALKING IN A WINTER WONDERLAND...

Whether you're staying in Dubai, or heading overseas, here are two festive markets to visit:

✳ The Souk Festive Market at Madinat Jumeirah is back from December 17 to 27. Open daily until midnight, the market is bigger and better than ever, and will be a great family attraction where kids can click a picture with Santa at the grotto, see the North Pole Train, go ice skating, indulge in roasted chestnuts and gingerbread treats, and take in the beauty of the eight-metre tall Christmas tree. Free entry for all, with food and beverage tokens available from Dhs50.

✳ If you're visiting London this month, don't miss the Festive Fair at Business Design Centre from December 6 to 8, where you can shop for gifts, warm up with cups of hot chocolate, and indulge in treats at the Festive Eatery. Dhs30 per person, visit www.festivefair.com.



#What's trending

#comfortfood

What's better than warm comfort food during winter? We found out that most people love tucking into a bowl of French onion soup, tomato soup with a grilled cheese sandwich and white chicken chilli. Brands such as Pillsbury have also been tweeting comfort food recipes such as a mac and cheese pot pie, and chilli with cheese twists.

Home

This just in:

This sleek and stylish PrimaDonna S Deluxe coffee machine from Delonghi allows you to make cappuccinos, lattes, macchiatos, or frothed milk with the touch of a button. The snazzy features include a cup warmer, autocappucino device which allows the milk to be stored in the fridge when not in use, a grinder which comes with 13 settings, and an auto clean function. Dhs5,995 at Jashanmal stores.



"Good bread is the most fundamentally satisfying of all foods; good bread with fresh butter, the greatest of feasts!"

- American chef and food writer, James Beard.

Gourmet doughnuts

Who doesn't love a decadent doughnut every now and then? When you feel a doughnut craving coming on next, visit Love Doughnuts at Guardian Towers Abu Dhabi, or order a delivery to Dubai (minimum order of Dhs100), to indulge in handcrafted doughnuts made using fresh ingredients, with gourmet fillings and toppings such as white chocolate and cappuccino, strawberry cheesecake, toffee apple Snickers and Belgian chocolate dip. Just don't worry about calorie counting when eating these, they're worth it! Call 02-4466240.









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The Saturday Brunch

Join us for a fabulous ending to the weekend at Channels for a Saturday Brunch. Come with friends and family to enjoy a choice of international cuisine, seafood specials, live cooking, delectable desserts and kids' entertainment. The weekend's 'last chance brunch' is every Saturday from 12.30pm to 3:30pm for:
AED 155* inclusive of soft drinks and juices.
AED 199* inclusive of standard selected beverages.

*All prices are in AED inclusive of 10% Service Charge and 10% Municipality Fees.

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Aisle file

Gorgeous gourmet buys, kitchen gear, home décor and more.



This gorgeous festive-inspired Winter bakery delight teapot with cover is making it into our gift wishlist! Dhs480 from **VILLEROY AND BOCH**.

The elegant Xenia New Composition Black dinner set adds a stylish touch to any dinner table. Dh269 from **HOME CENTRE.**





Tupperware boxes may be convenient, but not particularly attractive, especially if you're using them to take a treat to a friend's house. This Snokul tin with lid is what we'll be taking our homemade cookies and mince pies in for friends! Dhs35 for a set of three, at **IKEA**.



Get the kids to help you with festive baking, and let them decorate the cake with these Luxury pudding charms on ribbons. Dhs430 for a set of six at **HARVEST HOME**.



Looking for futuristic furniture for your home? This Illuminating coffee table will transform your space as you light up the toughened glass surface at night. Dhs14,680 at **WAMLI.COM**.



Treat yourself to a selection of additive-free chocolates in creative flavours such as root beer and ginger ale, lemonade, hazelnut latte, cookies and cream, and granny smith, to name a few, from home-grown artisan chocolate brand, **COCOSIA**. From Dhs110 for a 16 piece box.



This gold cutlery set by Cutipol is the ultimate in sophisticated style. You'll be using it for years, so it's worth the investment price! Dhs250 for a set of five pieces at **BLOOMINGDALE'S HOME**.



Serve your guests an array of delectable cheeses in this Slate cheeseboard which comes with a cheese-knife. We love that you can write the names of the cheeses with chalk, on the board! Dhs230 at **LAKELAND**.

Swap your favourite cake plate for a seasonal one this month, like this Porcelain cake plate, Dhs125 at **JASHANMAL STORES**.



Compiled by NICOLA MONTEATH | Photograps SUPPLIED



Here to help

Our expert chef Andy Campbell offers practical advice to tackle all your cooking dilemmas.



Q My kids don't like the strong ginger aroma in gingerbread. Is there a substitute I can add to diminish the smell?

A. I sometimes use store bought crystalised ginger, instead of ginger powder. You could also blanch finely chopped root ginger in boiling water, drain in a sieve and poach in a sugar syrup, this will give a much sweeter taste and reduce the strong aroma as well.

Q I like making crispy beef with gravy but find that the beef becomes soggy as soon as it's mixed with the gravy. Please help?

A. I usually drain the crispy beef on paper towels and prepare the gravy beforehand. You only need to mix the crispy beef into the gravy for about 30 seconds before serving, to coat it completely.

Q Could you please tell me which one is a healthier choice, manuka honey or agave syrup, and why?

A. Both are natural forms of sugar. Agave syrup comes from a cactus plant and has around 50 per cent fructose fruit sugar and 20 per cent glucose – which is about one and a half times sweeter than sugar. Manuka honey is from European bees that live on The Manuka tree (also known locally as the Tea Tree). This honey is said to have healing properties and is a popular health food – I'm a big fan. They are both equally healthy options for sweetening, it really depends on your personal choice.

Q How do I keep roasted vegetables from becoming a soggy mess when I pack them for lunch?

A. Before roasting vegetables, put them in a colander with a little salt. Wash them off once the moisture has drained. Then dry on a kitchen paper before roasting.



Q When I roast turkey, the skin always gets burnt instead of becoming crisp. How do I prevent this from happening?

A. Carefully add softened butter under the skin, this will moisten the white meat and run into the roasting tray. You can use the butter to baste the turkey every half an hour. Place the turkey in the centre of the oven and cover loosely with aluminum foil to prevent the skin from burning.

Andy's ingredient of the month

It has to be cranberries, this time of year! The little red fruit is rich in vitamins, and tastes great in mocktails. Eat them dried in couscous and salads, use them fresh for sauces, or roasted with chestnuts and Brussels sprouts.



Menu planner

Whip up a delicious meal with recipes from this issue

Boxing Day brunch



This **Christmas pizza** makes great use of leftovers but you'd never be able to tell! p67



Healthy and filling, the **Spinach & ricotta slice** is suitable for vegetarians, p58



Not just the perfect side, this **Pea, pancetta and potato salad** is delicious on its own too, p42



Warm, comforting, seasonal – **Apple crumble**, need we say more? p64

Compiled by NICOLA MONTEATH | Photographs PHOTOS.COM



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On test: Pasta machines

Essential home gadgets reviewed.



Nuova Imperia pasta maker

This compact pasta machine comes in four parts – the main body, work top clamp, tray and handle, all quick to assemble together using the picture on the box as a guide. The manual has an easy-to-follow guide to making pasta and trouble-shooting tips. This particular model can be used for making lasagna sheets, and strip pastas like spaghetti and tagliatelle, but other options for making gnocchi and ravioli are also available.

What we liked: Having decided to make our pasta debut with making tagliatelle for the first time, we found the key is to have patience with the dough. We first flattened the dough using the roller part of machine, and placed the dough on the tray to allow it to support the dough sheet and pass through smoothly. Once the dough rolled out, we used the rotating handle into the cutter setting (the tagliatelle cutter) to make the pasta. It turned out a bit thick, but we're guessing it's just a matter of practice; it did taste better than store-bought however. The small size is a plus point for cramped apartment kitchens, and is ideal for making small amounts of pasta – so if you're cooking for one, this is the gadget for you.

What we didn't like: We had to tighten the clamp against the work surface as it slipped slightly a couple of times.

To buy: Dhs290, at Tavola.

User tip
Clean the machine right away (not with water) or the dough will harden. Also, run dough through the cutter, before next use.



Lakeland pasta machine

The nifty and compact machine, which is only about 20cm in size, is ideal for small yet gourmet kitchens. Pastas such as fettuccine, tagliatelle and lasagna can be prepared from scratch, albeit in small quantities.

What we liked: With an easy rolling handle, the machine works by setting the dial – on the side of the machine – and then inserting the rotating handle into the slot, before passing the dough through and moving the handle manually to flatten or cut it. This process can be repeated, depending on the thickness of the dough you prefer. To get thin dough, use the ninth setting. The machine comes with step-by-step instructions and a recipe – making it perfect for beginners. We were satisfied with the way the pasta turned out. With such an affordable price tag, we will probably keep this machine on standby for weekends when we feel like turning into a domestic goddess, rather than regular use.

What we didn't like: The machine is a bit tricky to clean. If dough is stuck to the machine, it needs to be cleaned with a brush or wooden utensil, do not use a knife or even a cloth. Also, the handle is a bit loose, and comes out easily from the slot too. And even though the machine was easy to use, we found making pasta slightly time-consuming.

To buy: Dhs170, at Lakeland stores.

User tip
Make dough ahead and freeze to make homemade pasta a quicker affair.

Kenwood Titanium machine KM070 with AT972A Tagliolini metal pasta cutter and AT970 Flat pasta roller attachments.



This heavy duty machine is the perfect solution to everyday meal preparation and an essential for those who want an all-in-one gadget as it has a 6.7 litre bowl and can be used for chopping, grating, slicing, whisking and kneading. One of the add-on attachments is the AT972A taglioni pasta cutter for use with the AT970A flat pasta roller (you have to use this flat pasta maker before using other attachments) which is perfect for making tagliatelle and spaghetti at home.

What we liked: We're used to cooking with store-bought pasta, so it was quite interesting to make pasta from scratch – not to mention a great activity for kids to help with. Since the machine comes with a kneading attachment, we made the pasta dough in the machine itself, and then attached the AT970A roller to flatten the dough and make lasagna sheets – the dial settings need to be changed from slow to high (one to six) depending on the thinness of the dough preferred. We decided to challenge ourselves – also because we were craving spaghetti – and used the AT972A attachment as well. The flattened dough was placed into the cutter and came out sliced into the bowl below. We found that if you use the machine on the slow setting (one or two), the pasta comes out evenly and keeps it from becoming a big bundle or mess in the bowl below. The end result was great as the pasta tasted fresh, and didn't have any additives as well. Also, the entire process wasn't as laborious as we thought, and we are now converted to making homemade pasta from scratch regularly.

What we didn't like: The kitchen machine, although a multi-tasking gadget, is big and bulky, and won't fit into a storage cabinet.

To buy: The KM070 machine is Dhs5,995 and the pasta attachments are Dhs175 each. Available at Jashanmal stores.

User tip
Sprinkle a little flour on the pasta cutter, to keep dough from getting stuck while rolling out.

Reviews by ODILAINE MEJORADA, NICOLA MONTEATH and LAUREN WING | Photos SUPPLIED

What products would you like to see reviewed in the magazine? ✉ Tell us on feedback@bbcgoodfoodme.com or facebook.com/bbcgoodfoodme.

Tried & tasted

Each month, we review two of the city's top tables.

Brunch – with a difference



Where: Hola Hola Toro Toro brunch, Grosvenor House Dubai

What's it like: If massive buffet tables groaning under the weight of too much food is not your style, and brunch with table service is more up your street, then this is the one for you. Provided you love meat of course! This stylish Pan Latin American restaurant brings the Brazilian churrascaro to life in its Friday brunch, with natural light flooding the interiors and a buzzing atmosphere creating a relaxed yet glamorous vibe. The meal starts with specialties such as the traditional cheese bread, ceviche (fish cured in lemon juice), one of the best guacamoles I've ever tried, empanadas, and a delicious batter fried fish nugget being served on the table for sharing.

Soon after, the meatfest begins. The staff bring out different cuts of meat in quick succession, from tender Achiote marinated chicken and lamb chops, to the succulent picanha (the most popular churrasco cut), and everything in between – in true Rodizio style. Fresh salads including a healthy quinoa salad, polenta, the legendary yuca fries and corn mash crowd up the table as the perfect sides, and cocktails such as refreshing caipirinhas complete the mix, making for a truly traditional taste of Latin America. It's unlikely you will have room for dessert – we didn't – but traditional treats such as fruit platters and Dulce de leche puddings are also brought to the table at the end of the meal for sharing-style tucking in. With warm and friendly staff who seem genuinely interested in feeding you, you're bound to stagger out of there feeling as full as you would after a traditional buffet brunch – but with a far better taste in your mouth!

Best for: Celebrating a special occasion

If you want to go: Friday brunch, from Dhs300 per person (soft drinks package). Call 04-3176000.

- Sudeshna Ghosh



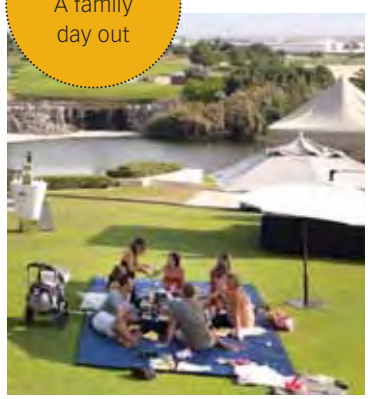
Where: The Picnic Brunch at Al Badia Golf Club

What's it like: Undoubtedly one of the most refreshingly unique brunches in town, this family-friendly, alfresco brunch is set on the lush putting green of the golf club, overlooking the ninth hole and a gushing waterfall. As you enter, you are handed a picnic hamper filled with a variety of starters, a baguette, juices and salads packed in mason jars – think prawn cocktail, smoked salmon and chive cream cheese, home-style potato crisps, beetroot slaw and homemade Scotch eggs – which you then take out to your personal picnic mat set up with umbrellas and a low table with plates and cutlery (tables are also available for those not keen on sitting on the ground). The picnic mat had us oohing and aahing before we even got to the food, with its luxuriously soft padding and super-absorbent material – perfect for fidgety kids. Children won't spend long at the table however, with a separate play area and plenty of space to run amok in – but only after they've demolished the contents of their personal mini picnic boxes which come packed not only with sandwiches, crisps and fruit, but also a bubble maker (genius!). While the hamper has enough food to fill anyone up, that is only the beginning, as there is a whole barbecue area with different stations cooking up delicacies like smoked beef brisket, smoked shoulder of lamb, kebabs, and salmon steaks, plus vegetarian delicacies and baked potatoes, to name just a few. A highlight of the BBQ? The mini beef burgers! There is a separate pork station, serving up sausages, ham, chorizo and lots more, but the best way to tackle it all is to order a platter with a bit of everything. Dessert is a whole other story, with 'Candy-land' proving to be a draw for kids and adults alike with its cheesecake, banoffee pie shooters and strawberries and cream, plus soft scoop ice creams. With drinks being served on the table, and an über chilled out atmosphere, you are likely to linger on here for as long as possible, plotting your next visit!

If you want to go: From Dhs265 per person (soft drinks package), Saturdays only. Call 04-7011127/1128.

- Sudeshna Ghosh

Best for: A family day out





Photographs SUPPLIED

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InterContinental Hotels Group Dubai Festival City



This festive season, InterContinental, Al Badia Golf Club and Crowne Plaza Dubai Festival City are unwrapping a fabulous calendar of lunches, brunches and gala dinners.

We're also offering a fresh turkey take-away service so you can dine in style at home too.

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InterContinental Dubai Festival City

InterContinental Residence Suites Dubai Festival City

Al Badia Golf Club InterContinental Dubai Festival City

Crowne Plaza Dubai Festival City

Flavours of the month

The most happening Christmas and New Year gatherings, takeaway offers and festive deals this month.

{ *Dubai* }



Christmas

✳ JW Marriott Marquis Dubai

Buy your traditional turkey with trimmings such as sautéed vegetables, roasted potato, sweet potato mash, cranberry sauce and herbed jus. When you visit the hotel to place your order, you can also head to La Farine, to see the gingerbread house and shop for festive hampers and gifts.
From Dhs590 per turkey, call 04-4140000.

✳ Al Dawaar, Hyatt Regency Dubai

Celebrate Christmas Eve dinner at Dubai's only rooftop revolving restaurant, and feast on turkey, salmon, oysters, prawns and foie gras from the buffet, as you take in the panoramic views of the sea and skyline at night.
Dhs130 per child (six-12 years old) and Dhs260 per person, call 04- 3172222.

✳ The Library, Sofitel Dubai The Palm Resort and Spa

Kick-start the festive season by taking the kids to the Festive afternoon tea where they can listen to Christmas stories, and try traditional specialties.
Available from December 8 to 23, from Dhs150 per person, call 04- 4556677.

✳ The Deck, JA Ocean View Hotel

Santa will be making his way to this lively outdoor venue, where the resident DJ will be playing everything from carols to the latest hits, while guests enjoy a beach-style barbecue on Christmas Eve.
From Dhs245 per person, call 04-8145590.

✳ Azalya, Melia Dubai

The Christmas Day Brunch features international fare such as Atlantic salmon boudin, artisan pasta, and roast with trimmings. Kids get to enjoy at the play area and tuck into child-sized dishes.
From Dhs149 per person, call 04-3868111.

Boxing Day

✳ The Talk, Mövenpick Hotel Jumeirah Beach

Make Boxing Day a special occasion with a selection of grills from the live Mediterranean barbecue station and mouth-watering seafood platters, by the poolside.
From Dhs175 per person, free for children below 12. Call 04-4498888.

New Year's Eve

✳ Chef's house, Radisson Blu Hotel, Dubai Media City

Once you recover from the New Year's Eve party, curb your hunger pangs at The Morning After New Year's Day brunch which includes a sumptuous buffet of international cuisine.
Dhs255 per person, call 04-3669111.

✳ Blue Jade, The Ritz-Carton Dubai

An Enchanting New Year's Eve dinner awaits guests at this contemporary Asian restaurant. Savour a five-course set menu beginning with a platter of foie gras, crab cakes, crispy prawns and chicken rice paper rolls, followed by pan-fried scallops and grilled prawns. Mains include an oven roasted king prawn and five spiced grilled beef tenderloin, while desserts add an exotic sweet ending to the feast.
Dhs1,000 per person, call 04-3186150.



✳ At.mosphere Lounge, Burj Khalifa

Bring in the New Year with an extravagant eight-course menu featuring Gillardeau oyster with sparkling sabayon, Australian rock lobster, salsify and duck prosciutto, Wagyu fillet with short rib tortellini, and artichoke gratin with 24-carat gold accents. A chocolate firework dessert will mark the perfect end to this dinner.
From Dhs3,000 per person with paired beverages and bubbly. Call 04-8883828.

Compiled by NICOLA MONTEATH | Photographs SUPPLIED

{Abu Dhabi}

Christmas & New Year's Eve

✳ Dusit Thani Abu Dhabi

This Thai hotel's lobby will be livened up with merry tunes from carol singers, beverages, stollen and a Christmas tree lighting ceremony. Children and adults alike will enjoy this ceremony, which also marks the King of Thailand's birthday. A Christmas retail counter at Orchid lounge will also be selling cookies and hampers on the day.
On December 5, call 02-6988888.

✳ Bord Eau, Shangri-La Qaryat Al Beri, Abu Dhabi

If you're looking for a Christmas Eve dinner or lunch with a twist, look no further than Bord Eau, where you can relish French specialties from a five-course set menu. Wine pairings and a welcome glass of bubbly are also offered.
Dhs600 for dinner on December 24 and Dhs500 for lunch on December 25. Call 02-5098511.

✳ Le Deck, Monte-Carlo Beach Club, Saadiyat

Enjoy a lavish Christmas feast by ordering a traditional turkey, goose, wagyu sirloin, or tenderloin from this restaurant. Festive baskets with raw and cooked ingredients – which can be put straight into the oven – are also available along with cooking instructions to make Christmas dinner easy peasy!
From Dhs540 per turkey, call 02-6563500.

✳ Fairways, The Westin Abu Dhabi Golf Resort and Spa

Santa's got a gift for young ones, so take the kids to the Christmas Eve dinner and let them get thrilled by Santa's visit and sing along to Christmas carols. While the kids are at play, sate your appetite with traditional turkey and trimmings, seafood and desserts from the buffet.
From Dhs265 per adult and Dhs135 per child. Call 02-6169999.



✳ 18 degrees, Hyatt Capital Gate

For a fun, sophisticated New Year's Eve party, book the Glow Premium dinner package which includes a five-course set menu dinner, welcome glass of champagne, premium wine pairing and access to the after-party at the outdoor pool deck where DJ Simon B from Radio 1 will be spinning the latest hits.
From Dhs800 for packages, call 02-5961234. >>

New Year's Eve
at table 9

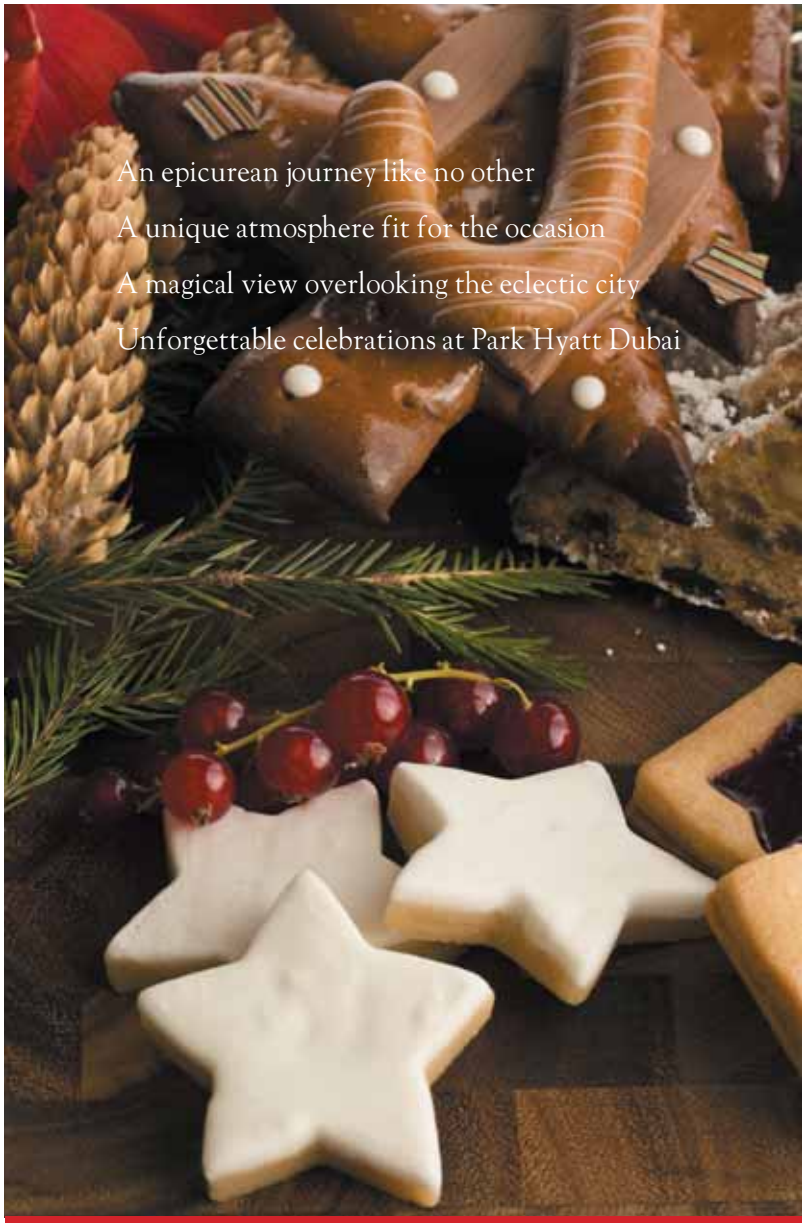
Begin 2014 with us and experience
an exclusive dinner
featuring a 6-course menu
with optional grape pairing.

AED 895 per person

31st of December from 6:30pm

To book call 04-2127551 or visit
www.table9dubai.com

table 9
by nick and scott



Looking to celebrate Christmas and ring in 2014 in lavish style? Park Hyatt Dubai has it all covered. From festive dinners and brunches at the award-winning Traiteur, to extravagant seasonal feasts at The Terrace and Café Arabesque, this will surely be a remarkable festive experience. You are invited to celebrate the New Year in an enchanting ambiance overlooking the exquisite Dubai skyline, with live music, free-flowing premium beverages and a perfect view of the city's fireworks displays. Park Hyatt Dubai awaits you.

For more information please call +971 4 6021804
or visit our website dubai.park.hyatt.com

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Flavours of the month

This month's top restaurant promotions.

What else is on in town

✴ Comfort food at its best!



Rhodes Twenty10 at Le Royal Meridien Beach Resort and Spa has launched a new menu, which includes dishes to share such as warm sesame glazed duck with orange and maple dressed salad, and mains such as Lochfyne Scottish salmon and steak and kidney pie. The dessert menu features a pudding plate of sticky toffee pudding with toffee sauce, chocolate and orange Jaffa cake and strawberry shortcake with vanilla ice cream.
Available for dinner, call 04-3165550.

✴ Alfresco dining

Grab a bunch of friends and head to 3 in1 at Vida Downtown to try the Urban Picnic brunch on Fridays, where you can sit on a blanket on the grass near the pool area, and tuck into gourmet goodies from a picnic basket while the in-house DJ sets the tone for a chilled-out afternoon.
From Dhs225, call 04-4285923.

✴ Chinese flavours

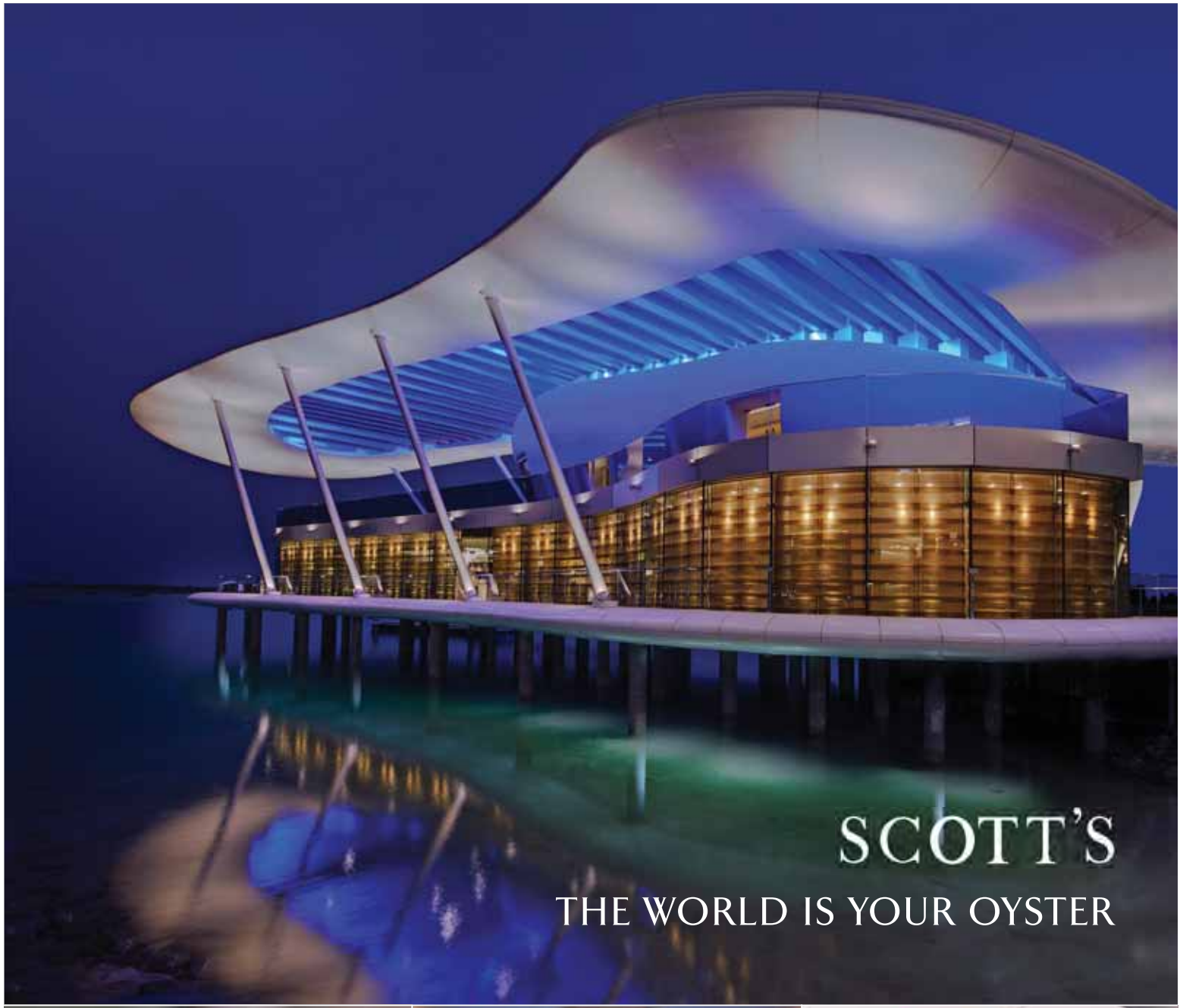
Royal China in DIFC has introduced an authentic weekend brunch, where guests can choose six dim sum options which feature the Shanghai Xiao bun and prawn dumplings, to name a few, and tuck into cups of flower jasmine and long jing tea. The brunch is also available with pairings and house beverages.
Every Friday and Saturday, from Dhs318 per person. Call 04-3545543.

✴ Brunch on Thursday?

That's right! Meet up with friends after work, and head to the all-new D-licious Thursday evening brunch at The D, McGettigan's DWTC, to get the weekend started. Diners can choose from an à la carte menu or buffet, and enjoy sparkling wine, free blowing beer and spirits.
Dhs299 per person, call 04-3780808.

✴ New adventures for your tastebuds

It's been five years since Nobu at Atlantis the Palm Dubai has been exciting Dubai's diners with its Japanese delights, and to celebrate, the restaurant has introduced new items on the menu, recently launched by the man himself, Nobu Matsuhisa. The new menu features dishes such as succulent grilled chicken wings with miso salt, more-ish Nobu Wagyu sliders, mouthwatering King crab with egg sauce and Shimeji (mushroom) tempura. There's no better reason to visit this iconic restaurant than this!
À la carte menu, call 04-4260760. GF









With its stunning location over water, Scott's exudes the elegance of a yacht and the inviting shape of a clam housing the most valuable of pearls. From the celebrity spot in Mayfair London to its new home in Abu Dhabi, the restaurant is known for its British authenticity, serving gourmet seafood while preserving its simplicity. With splendind interiors, a terrace with eye-pleasing sea vistas and a cuisine that is a first for Abu Dhabi. From the 8th to the 14th December try Chef Carl Tichart's tailored 6 course tasting menu "Taste of British" and enjoy a glass of bubbly with our compliments.

For reservations, please call +971 2 811 5666 or email JADrestaurants@jumeirah.com

Jumeirah
at ETIHAD TOWERS
ABU DHABI

The Doha diaries

Our Doha-based columnist has his finger on the pulse of the city's foodie scene.

The silly season!



I don't know about you, but I can't quite believe that 2013 is nearly over. And what a year it's been. The population surge has meant a massive rise in new restaurants, hotel openings and new events in Doha over the last year. For me, (with a few obvious exceptions, like the 'carmageddon' we've all become used to – read increased traffic woes) Doha has never been better.

While most hotels pull out all stops with Christmas menus and buffets, if you're like me, then Christmas really isn't Christmas unless it involves a good old turkey dinner around the dining room table – eating out has always felt a bit like cheating. But if you can't quite muster the energy for that dreaded seven hour cook-a-thon to make sure everything's ready in time, then help is at hand. Many of the five star hotels in the city offer a 'Turkey-to-go' service, with a full roast turkey, all the trimmings, dessert and any add-ons you could dream of. A favorite of mine has always been the St Regis Doha. You'll need to order well in advance though as there's usually a limited amount of turkeys in Qatar!

Now, if you're a parent whose little ones have been bending your ear about Christmas since Halloween, then you're in for a treat. On December 6, Doha mums are putting on a Winter Wonderland Extravaganza from 12-6pm at the Grand Hyatt Doha. The festivities include a Christmas choir, bouncy castles, face painting, nail art, a visit from Santa and his elves as well as a real snow machine and plenty of things for the grown-ups to drink and eat! And if you stick around after this has finished, you can take part in the tree lighting festivities in the greenest gardens in the city, with live music, festive drinks and more. The various tree lighting ceremonies that take place this month are one of my favourite things to see in Doha in the run up to festive season (probably because I'm still a child inside when it comes to all things Christmas)!

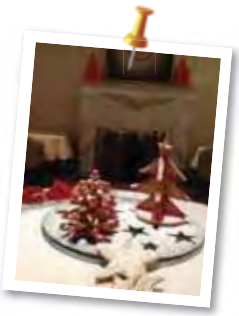
The fun doesn't stop there. This year, the Ritz-Carlton Doha are putting on an all singing, all dancing Christmas market in the gardens of the hotel. Head down there on December 8 after 4pm, for a Christmas choir, hot chocolate and cookies, and watch as the garden gives way to thousands of twinkling Christmas lights as the sun goes down.

However you end up spending the festive season, here's wishing you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

- Jonathan Parsons is co-owner and editor of Qatar's largest online restaurant guide, www.diningindoha.com.

The latest food news and happenings in the city.

Fun for the kids



Take the children to a Sugar and Spice festive cooking class at Astor Grill Kitchen, The St. Regis Doha, where chef Elias Gemayel from Opal by Gordon Ramsay, will demonstrate how to make simple holiday treats such as snowballs made from marshmallows and strawberries.
QR100 per person on December 7, call +974 4446 0106.

A merry brunch

Treat the family out to a Christmas Day brunch at Choices, Oryx Rotana Doha, and indulge in traditional turkey with trimmings and food from live cooking stations at the buffet. You can also expect a visit from Santa who will be giving gifts to children.
From QR250 per person, call +974 4402 3333.



Festive takeaway

Don't have time to prepare a whole roast turkey? Order your Christmas meal from W Café, W Doha Hotel and Residences, and have it ready for your festive gathering. Pumpkin, sweet potato, and pecan pie, as well as apple crumble and roast beef can all be ordered as well.
QR750 for the turkey, call +974 4453 5135.

Tea with Santa!

Enjoy afternoon tea at Sky Villa, Kempinski Residences and Suites, Doha, where you can treat yourself to cakes and finger foods from the afternoon tea buffet, while the children take pictures with Santa, and decorate gingerbread cookies.
QR165 per person, every Friday and Saturday until Christmas. Call +974 4405 3325.

Seasonal dining



The Lagoon at The Ritz-Carlton, Doha, has all your festive season events sorted! Whether it's Christmas Day brunch which includes a fruit de mer ice bar at the food station and festive desserts at the special dessert buffet, or a New Year's Eve banquet to enjoy with family and friends, you will have a celebratory time throughout the season.
From QR350 for the brunch and QR450 for New Year's Eve dinner, per person. Call +974 4484 8000.

Additional text NICOLA MONTEATH | Photos SUPPLIED | All details are correct at the time of going to print, however we advise that you check with the hotels to ensure correct timings before making plans

LAFAYETTE GOURMET

INTERNATIONAL FOOD HALLS & DINING

SEASON'S GREETINGS

It's a holiday full of festivities at Lafayette Gourmet

Whether you're looking to pick up something a little extra special in store from our 8 kitchens, or planning a special dinner with friends, at Lafayette Gourmet we can help you bring a piece of home into your holidays, providing you with a range of festive specialties; from bespoke hampers to full catered festive dinners at home.

Indulge yourself this season with our jolly cooking classes and in store festive activities...

COOKING CLASSES

Saturday December 14th | Mom and child
Gingerbread house decoration, mince pies baking and festive cookies

Monday December 9th and Wednesday December 11th | The perfect Christmas
Table set up and food styling

AED145 per person

PROMOTIONS

Sunday December 15th - Wednesday December 25th,
daily festive carvery and Business lunch within Gourmet

AED65 per person

2nd Floor Galeries Lafayette, The Dubai Mall - lafayettegourmet.chef@medsdubai.com



GENERATION CREATION SATURDAY

FAMILY BRUNCH AT *Mazina*

Showcase your pastry skills this festive season as Mazina ends the year with its biggest weekend brunch challenge yet. With amazing prizes up for grabs, join forces with another family member to decorate a traditional gingerbread house with coloured icing and sweet treats to create an edible work of art. Feast on a lavish buffet spread of seasonal delights and international classics while Wii games, face painting and a bouncy castle amuse our younger guests for all-round festive family fun.

Date: 21st December 2013
Time: 12.30 pm to 3.30 pm
Special price: AED 220 including soft drinks
Children aged between 7-12 years enjoy meals for half the price and under 6 years dine with our compliments

T: +971 4 436 7777 E: DINE.DUBAIMARINA@THEADDRESS.COM
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WHERE *life* HAPPENS

Culina-reads

Reviews of the latest cookbooks, food shows and mobile apps.

On my bookshelf. . .



We ask the pros to tell us about the cookbook they can't live without.

Chef Dede Kusware, Head Chef, Pantry Café

"My favourite cook book is *The French Laundry Cookbook* by Thomas Keller (Artisan). Although his ingredients are simple, he marries them in unusual ways to create extraordinary bursts of flavour. The book is beautiful with gorgeous food photography and is a real inspiration to me when I look for new recipes. And even though the recipes in the book are complicated, the results can be outstanding."

Watch this:



Beit Omaima
Mondays and Wednesdays on Yahoo Maktoob

This online Arabic lifestyle show is hosted by the elegant Omaima Marmarchi, a socialite hostess par excellence with expertise in food, interiors, flowers and more – basically, the Martha Stewart of the Arab world! The bi-weekly series has her showcasing tips on entertaining in style, in short six minute capsules, with English subtitles. Most of the content is tailored for the Arab audience, but even non-Arab speakers can find ideas and inspiration for table-setting, party-planning and so on.

Download this:



The Entertainer mobile app
available for iPhone, Android and BlackBerry 10 phones

Everyone's favourite discount voucher book has, in keeping with the times, gone mobile! No need to carry the bulky books around, or poring over pages to find the right outlet anymore – the app not only has the same buy-one-get-one-free offers as the books, but other techie value-adds such as location-based services, a savings calculator and even social media sharing options.

Text SUDESHNA GHOSH | Photographs SUPPLIED, ANAS CHERUR



What Katie ate, Recipes and other bits & pieces by Katie Quinn Davies *(Viking)*

A classic case of a popular blogger turning into a cookbook writer, this is the print avatar of Katie's blog by the same name. An Irish former art director turned food stylist and photographer based in Sydney, Katie's visual talent is showcased to great effect in this beautiful hard bound book – her fairy-tale like success story, which she talks about with candour and humour in her introduction, resonating almost as much as the content of the book. Stunning photography, with a natural, rustic approach to the styling, and the gorgeous vintage-style design almost overshadow the practical, fun, and undoubtedly delicious recipes. But coming from the kitchen of the untrained Katie, they are the sort of recipes that every one of us will end up recreating at some point, whether it's for a casual evening with friends, or a weekend brunch (Pumpkin ravioli with brown butter sauce, or Mini eggs benedict, anyone?). The recipes are divided in quite a straightforward fashion by mealtimes, with separate chapters dedicated to Salads, Canapes and drinks, Sides and sauces and Desserts, and there is an opening chapter of Tips and tricks where Katie shares her thoughts on everything from making mayonnaise to serving ganache. But, you don't buy this book for the culinary knowledge it imparts, you buy it for the sheer visual indulgence it offers. It makes a great gift for the festive season too!

Dhs136, available at Jashanmal bookstores

Barbecue summer eating (Love food)

While the rest of the Northern hemisphere is cosying up by the fireside, we in the Middle East have the luxury of sunny days, alfresco eating and of course, barbecue season in December! If you're the sort of person who is used to chucking a steak on the bbq and leaving it at that, but want to take your grilled dishes to the next level, then this book is for you. A mix of standard barbecue recipes – a classic hamburger and minted lamb chops, for example – as well as adventurous dishes such as Cajun chicken, Coconut prawns, and Caribbean fish kebabs, it's quite a comprehensive grill guide. But where it really comes into its own is the vegetables section – with creative ideas not just for sides, but also veggie grilled dishes – and the desserts section, a totally creative way to use the bbq next time, to impress your guests.



Dhs30, available at Jashanmal bookstores



Eat to live cookbook by Joel Fujrman *(Harper One)*

Written by a doctor, this is the follow-up to the bestselling *Eat to Live* book that introduced a new approach to healthy eating based on the philosophy of 'nutritarianism'. Largely aimed at an American fast food-guzzling audience, the book is also relevant for the obesity-prone Middle Eastern audience too. Part cookbook, part nutrition guide, the book helpfully lists out ingredients and their nutritional benefits, offers advice on how to choose right when food shopping, and includes a guide to what should be on your plate (refuting USDA guidelines, which, according to Dr Joel, don't make sense). His advice is based on a largely vegetarian, plant food-rich diet, with a focus on beans and legumes, and advises limiting animal proteins, with the view of promoting not just weight loss, but also reversing disease (such as heart conditions). The recipes are a compilation of inputs from various guest chefs, ranging from Vegetable smoothies and Quinoa mango salad, to healthy takes on fast food such as Sunny bean burgers and Roasted vegetable pizza. An ideal read for those who currently have an unhealthy diet, or someone looking to eat more vegetarian food.

Dhs94, available at Kinokuniya

The 2013 *festive gift guide*

Gourmet gifts that any foodie would love to receive! What are you asking for this year?

For HER



Dhs 29

SNÖFINT CHAMPAGNE GLASS 18CL PACK OF 2, AT IKEA



Dhs 89

GREEN GATE COPENHAGEN COLLECTION ZOE RED BOWL, AT INDIGO LIVING





Dhs 25

SNÖKUL TEA TOWEL 50X70CM MULTICOLOUR 2PACK, AT IKEA



Dhs 290

MEDIUM SWIRLED CANDLESTICK, AT ETHAN ALLEN



BOITES MAISON CHOCOLATE BOX, AT LA MAISON DU CHOCOLAT

From Dhs 755





Dhs 81

RED CHRISTMAS TEA CAVIAR TEA TIN, AT TWG TEA SALON AND BOUTIQUE





VERA WANG LACE GOLD COLLECTION, DINNER SET, AT BLOOMINGDALE'S HOME

From Dhs 115

Complied by SUDESHNA GHOSH and NICOLA MONTEATH



OLD COUNTRY ROSES TEA POT, SUGAR POT AND CREAM JUG, AVAILABLE AT JASHANMAL STORES

From Dhs **245**

Dhs **500**

TAJ WOOD SCHERER SET OF 3 TINS WITH CROSS STITCH, AT SAUCE GIFTS







FLOWERS FRY PAN, AT HOMES R US

Dhs **79**



Dhs **385**

LE CREUSET CERAMIQUE GLAMOUR MINI, SET OF 3 MINI POTS AT BLOOMINGDALE'S HOME



MICHAEL ARAM TRAY, AT HARVEY NICHOLS-DUBAI

Dhs **400**



Dhs **145**

CHERISHED RECIPE FILE, AT LAKELAND

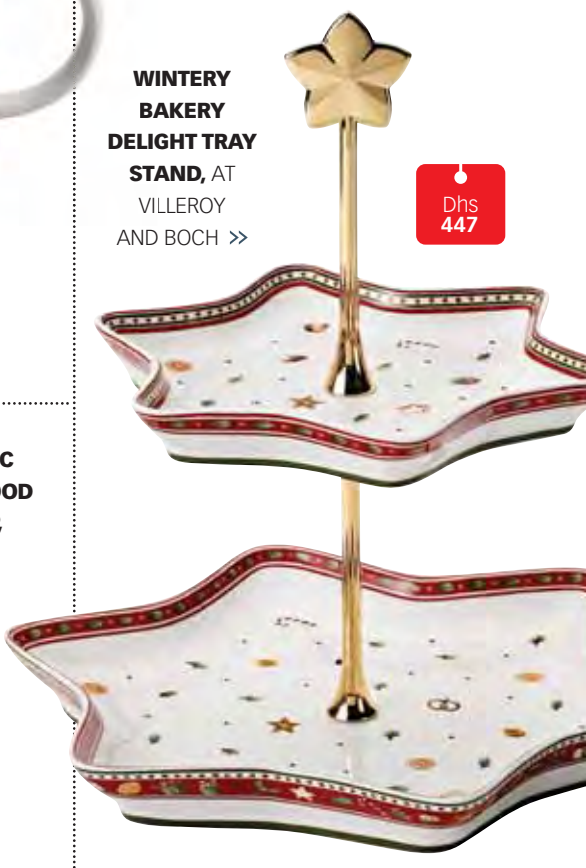


Dhs **39**

CHING TEAPOT WITH INFUSER, AT HOMES R US

WINTERY BAKERY DELIGHT TRAY STAND, AT VILLEROY AND BOCH >>

Dhs **447**





Dhs **180**

SANDERSON ALMOND AND IRIS OIL DIFFUSER, AT TEJURI.COM





Dhs **975**

PIECES BY FARAH BOWL, AT SAUCE GIFTS

A YEAR'S SUBSCRIPTION TO BBC GOOD FOOD ME MAGAZINE & FOOD CLUB PREMIUM MEMBERSHIP, AT WWW.CPIMEDIAGROUP.COM

Dhs **120**



For HIM



Dhs 1,269

ONE-TOUCH PREMIUM PLUS 57CM SPRING GREEN AT ACE



HUROM SLOW JUICER, AT TEJURI.COM

Dhs 590

From Dhs 40

TALA BAKING ESSENTIALS, AT BLOOMINGDALE'S HOME





Dhs 295

KMIX JUG KETTLE, AT JASHANMAL STORES



Dhs 110

KING OF THE BARBEQUE OVEN MITT BY SANTA BALLS, AT HARVEST HOME

PHILIPS HOMECOOKER, AT ALL LEADING STORES

Dhs 1,499





Dhs 1,150

NADA DEBS COASTERS SET OF 6, AT HARVEY NICHOLS DUBAI

Dhs 1,300

CREMESSO COFFEE MACHINE, AT BLOOMINGDALE'S HOME





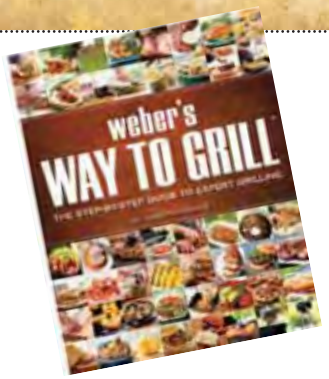
Dhs 123,420

STAG BARWARE SET OF 3 PIECES, AT ASPREY

Dhs 275 & 1,000

MICHAEL ARAM SERVER AND STAND, AT BLOOMINGDALE'S HOME





Dhs 155

WEBER'S WAY TO GRILL, AT ACE

For KIDS



Dhs 606

NOSTALGIC DREAMS PICK-UP CHRISTMAS ORNAMENT, AT VILLEROY AND BOCH

Dhs 49

GIFT MUG SET, AT ACE





STOR POPCORN BUCKET SPIDER MAN, AT HOMES R US

Dhs 19



CHRISTMAS COLOUR-IN TABLECLOTH BY EGGNOG, AT HARVEST HOME

Dhs 50



Dhs 35

CUPCAKE KIT FOR 24 CUPCAKES, AT JASHANMAL STORES



Dhs 55

FRED AND FRIENDS 'CAKE CROWNS', AT BLOOMINGDALE'S HOME



Dhs 17

FUNNY SANDWICH BOX BARBIE, AT HOMES R US

GREEN GATE COPENHAGEN COLLECTION POLKA DOT 16 PC CUTLERY SET, AT INDIGO LIVING



Dhs 289



Dhs 299

WMF CIRCUS CHILD CUTLERY SET OF 7 PIECES, AT TAVOLA



Dhs 76

CAMELBAK EDI KIDS BOTTLE, AT SPORTSONE



Dhs 70

MERI MERI GOING FOR GOLD CUPCAKE SET, AT BLOOMINGDALE'S HOME

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Home Cooking

Inspiring recipes for easy everyday meals and stylish weekend entertaining

IN THIS SECTION



✳ Simple yet tasty weeknight suppers, **P32**



✳ Entertain buffet-style this season, **P56**



✳ Make your own macarons at home, **P78**

Turkey crown with chorizo stuffing, recipe p49

Make it tonight

Five new great-value ideas for everyday dinners. Recipes JEMMA MORPHET Photographs PETER CASSIDY

Chicken & lentil stew with gremolata

SERVES 4 ● PREP 10 MINS ● COOK 55 MINS Easy ❄ Low cal 2 of 5-a-day Good for you

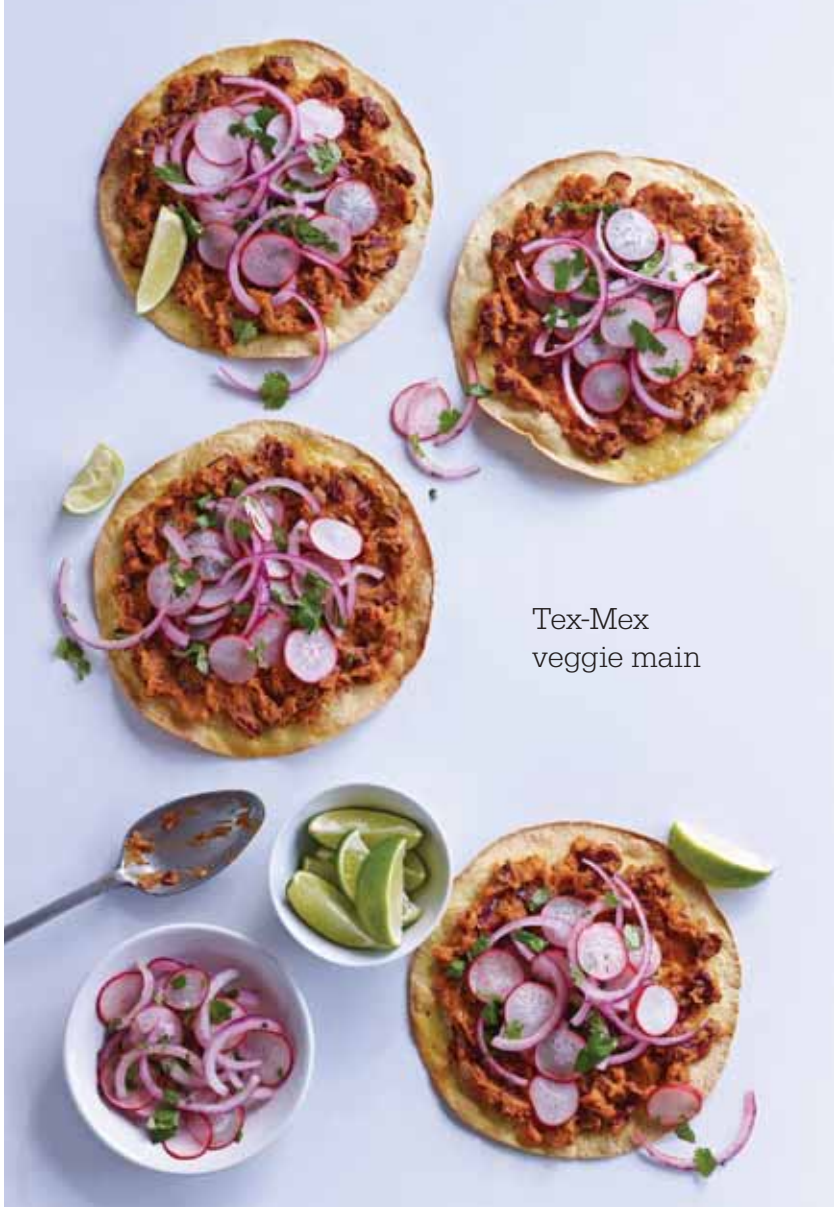
2 tbsp olive oil
8 chicken drumsticks, skin left on
2 onions, very finely chopped
6 tbsp red lentils
400g can chopped tomatoes
1 chicken stock cube, crumbled
Crusty bread, to serve
FOR THE GREMOLATA
Zest of 1 lemon
1 garlic clove, finely chopped
Small handful of parsley, finely chopped

1 Heat half the oil in a large flameproof casserole dish, brown the drumsticks on all sides, then transfer to a plate.
2 Add the onions and remaining oil to the pan, and cook for 5 mins or so until soft. Add the lentils, tomatoes, 1 can of water and the stock cube. Return the drumsticks to the pan. Bring to the boil, then turn down the heat, put on a lid and simmer for 30 mins or until tender. Keep an eye on the stew and add a little water if it is drying out. Remove the lid and cook for another 10 mins, or until the sauce has thickened, then season.
3 Meanwhile, make the gremolata. Mix the lemon zest, garlic and parsley together. Sprinkle over the cooked stew and serve with a chunk of crusty bread.

PER SERVING 337 kcals, protein 32g, carbs 20g, fat 15g, sat fat 3g, fibre 4g, sugar 7g, salt 1.2g

Healthy and delicious

Food styling JAYNE CROSS | Styling REBECCA NEWPORT



Tex-Mex
veggie main

Spicy bean tostadas with pickled onions & radish salad

SERVES 4 ● PREP 15 MINS
● COOK 12 MINS Easy V Low cal Low fat Fibre 2 of 5-a-day Good for you

2 red onions, 1 thinly sliced, 1 finely chopped
2 limes, juice of 1 and 1 cut into wedges
1½ tbsp sunflower oil
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
2 tsp ground cumin
1 tbsp tomato purée
1 tbsp chipotle paste
400g can kidney beans, drained and rinsed
4 corn tortillas
140g radishes, thinly sliced
Large handful coriander, roughly chopped

1 Heat oven to 220C/200C fan. Put the sliced onion, lime juice and seasoning in a bowl, and set aside.
2 Heat 1 tbsp of the oil in a pan and fry the chopped onion and garlic until tender. Stir in the cumin and fry for 1 min more. Add the tomato purée, chipotle paste and beans, stir, then tip in half a can of water. Simmer for 5 mins, season, then roughly mash to a purée. (You can cook for a few mins more if it is a bit runny, or add a few splashes of water to thin.)
3 Meanwhile, brush the tortillas with the remaining oil and place on a baking sheet. Bake for 8 mins until crisp. Spread the tortillas with the bean mixture. Mix the radishes and coriander with the pickled onions, then spoon on top. Serve with lime wedges.

PER SERVING 244 kcals, protein 8g, carbs 34g, fat 5g, sat fat 2g, fibre 6g, sugar 7g, salt 0.7g



Speedy
pasta sauce

Creamy tagliatelle with sausage, ricotta & basil

SERVES 4 ● PREP 10 MINS
● COOK 20 MINS Easy Calcium 1 of 5-a-day

1 tbsp olive oil
1 onion, finely chopped
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
400g good-quality beef sausages skins removed, broken into small chunks
400g chopped tomatoes
400g tagliatelle
Handful of basil, reserving smaller leaves to garnish
½ x 250g tub ricotta

1 Heat the oil in a large frying pan, tip in the onion and garlic, and soften for about 10 mins. Add the sausage meat chunks and brown for 5 mins. Tip in the chopped tomatoes and simmer for 5 mins or so, until thick and the sausagemeat is cooked through. Meanwhile, cook the pasta following pack instructions.
2 Season the tomato sauce and toss through the drained tagliatelle. Tear the basil and stir it through as well. Spoon into bowls and dot with ricotta. Grind over some pepper and sprinkle with the small basil leaves.

PER SERVING 617 kcals, protein 29g, carbs 63g, fat 28g, sat fat 10g, fibre 2g, sugar 8g, salt 2.1g >>



Roasted red pepper & parsley pesto with penne

SERVES 4 ● PREP 5 MINS ● COOK 10 MINS Easy V Low cal Good for you

400g penne
290g jar roasted red peppers, drained
Large handful of flat-leaf parsley, plus a few chopped leaves to garnish
75g unsalted cashew nuts
1 large garlic clove, roughly chopped
2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
50g Parmesan (or vegetarian alternative), grated

1 Cook the pasta following pack instructions. Meanwhile, put the peppers, parsley, nuts, garlic and olive oil in a small food processor or mini chopper, and whizz to a pesto consistency. Season and mix in the Parmesan.
2 Drain the pasta and return to the pan with the pesto. Stir and gently heat for 1 min, then sprinkle with a little more chopped parsley and serve.

PER SERVING 495 kcals, protein 20g, carbs 57g, fat 21g, sat fat 5g, fibre 1g, sugar 2g, salt 0.3g

MAKE IT DIFFERENT

- Try using blanched almonds instead of the cashew nuts.
- For a Greek-inspired twist, replace the Parmesan with feta.



Spiced pork patty baguette

SERVES 4 ● PREP 15 MINS ● COOK 30 MINS Easy P Fibre Vit C 1 of 5-a-day

2 tbsp olive oil
3 onions, 2½ sliced, ½ grated
1 red pepper, thinly sliced into strips
pinch of chilli flakes
2 garlic cloves, crushed
2 tsp fennel seeds, lightly crushed using a pestle and mortar
400g pork mince (can be swapped with beef or chicken mince)
1 long baguette, ends cut off and reserved, remaining part cut into 4 and halved across
2 tbsp tomato ketchup
Couple of handfuls of lamb's lettuce

1 Heat half the oil in a frying pan and add the sliced onions, the pepper and some seasoning. Cook on a low heat for 15 mins until the pepper is soft and the onions are caramelised.
2 Meanwhile, put the chilli flakes, garlic, fennel, mince and grated onion in a bowl. Whizz the bread ends into breadcrumbs and add those, too. Season and mix everything thoroughly. Heat a griddle pan and shape the meat mixture into 12 patties. Rub the patties with the remaining oil and griddle for 3-4 mins each side, or until cooked through.
3 Stir the ketchup into the onion mix, heat through, then spoon onto the baguette bottoms. Lay 3 patties on each baguette, scatter with some lamb's lettuce and top with the other half of baguette.

PER SERVING 544 kcals, protein 29g, carbs 65g, fat 18g, sat fat 5g, fibre 7g, sugar 15g, salt 1.5g GF



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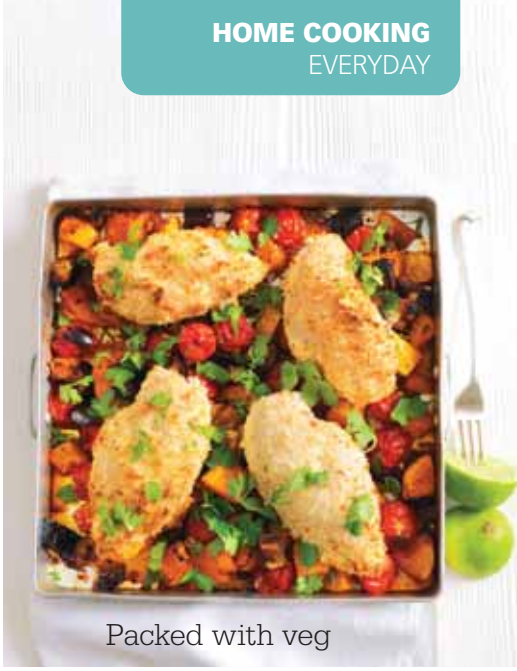
global hotel alliance

A week of healthy one-pots

Take the hassle out of cooking wholesome family food this month. These hearty one-pots are full of flavour and so easy to make.

Recipes JEMMA MORPHET Photographs JONATHAN KENNEDY





Packed with veg

Creamy beetroot curry

SERVES 4 ● PREP 15 MINS ● COOK 45 MINS Easy V Low cal Folate Fibre Iron 3 of 5-a-day

1 tbsp vegetable oil
2 onions, very finely chopped
2 tsp yellow mustard seeds
3 tbsp Madras curry paste
1kg (peeled weight) raw beetroot, peeled, halved and thickly sliced
1 green chilli, halved lengthways
400g can chopped tomatoes
3 tbsp ground almonds
4 tbsp low-fat natural yoghurt, plus extra to serve
Basmati rice, to serve (optional)

1 Heat the oil in a large lidded pan, stir in the onions and cook for 8 mins until soft. Tip in the mustard seeds and cook for 1 min until toasted. Stir through the curry paste and sizzle for 3 mins.
2 Mix the beetroot through the spicy onions, then add the chilli, tomatoes and 2 cans of water. Cover and simmer for 30 mins, stirring occasionally, until the beetroot is tender. Remove the lid, turn up the heat and cook until the sauce is thick.
3 Take off the heat, then stir through the almonds, yogurt and some seasoning. Top with yoghurt and serve with basmati rice, if you like.

PER SERVING 271 kcals, protein 11g, carbs 29g, fat 13g, sat fat 1g, fibre 7g, sugar 26g, salt 1.0g

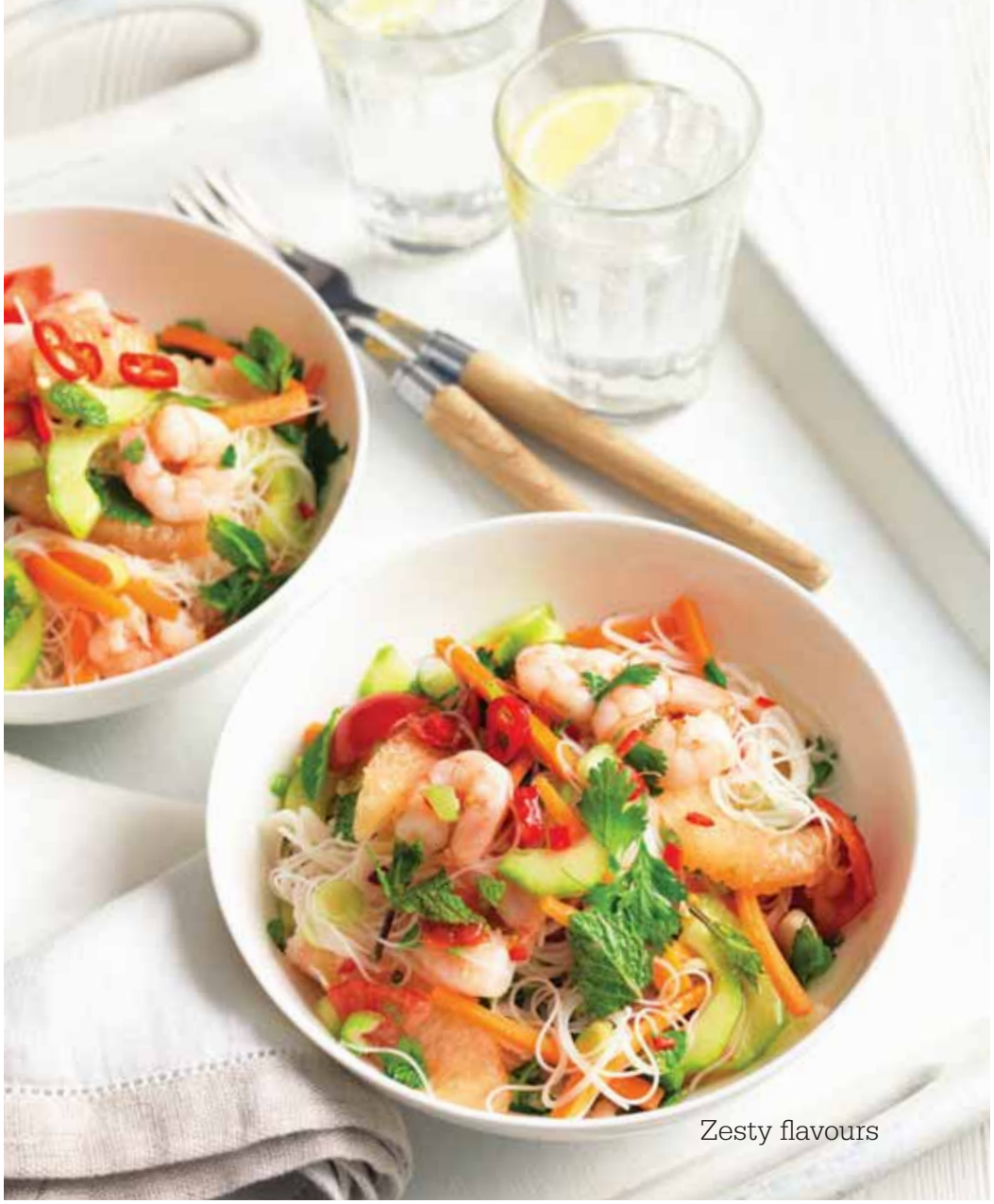
Thai coconut crumbed chicken traybake

SERVES 4 ● PREP 15 MINS ● COOK 1 HR Easy Low cal Fibre Vit C Iron 3 of 5-a-day

1 butternut squash, peeled, deseeded and cubed
1 large aubergine, cubed
1 tbsp rapeseed oil
3 tbsp desiccated coconut
4 tbsp fresh breadcrumbs
4 skinless chicken breasts
1 egg, beaten
300g/11oz cherry tomatoes
2 tbsp red Thai curry paste
Handful of coriander leaves, roughly chopped
Lime wedges, to serve

1 Heat oven to 200C/180C fan. In a large, shallow roasting tin, toss the squash and aubergine in the oil, then season and spread out in a single layer. Roast for 30 mins, turning once.
2 On a plate, mix the coconut and breadcrumbs with some seasoning. Dip the chicken breasts in the egg, then press in the crumbs to coat, shaking off any excess.
3 Toss the tomatoes and curry paste in with the roasted veg and give everything a good stir. Nestle the chicken breasts in the veg and pop back in the oven for a further 25-30 mins until the chicken is cooked through, shaking the pan once or twice. Sprinkle over the coriander and serve with lime wedges to squeeze over.

PER SERVING 414 kcals, protein 38g, carbs 32g, fat 15g, sat fat 7g, fibre 8g, sugar 14g, salt 0.9g >>



Zesty flavours

Prawn & pink grapefruit noodle salad

SERVES 6 ● PREP 25 MINS ● NO COOK

Easy | Low cal | Low fat | Vit C | 2 of 5-a-day

200g thin rice noodles (vermicelli)
12 cherry tomatoes, halved
1 tbsp fish sauce
Juice of 1 lime
2 tsp palm sugar or soft brown sugar
1 large red chilli, ½ diced, ½ sliced
2 pink grapefruit, segmented
½ cucumber, peeled, deseeded and thinly sliced
2 carrots, cut into matchsticks
3 spring onions, thinly sliced
400g cooked large prawns
Large handful each of mint and coriander, leaves picked

1 Put the noodles in a bowl, breaking them up a little, and cover with boiling water from the kettle. Leave to soak for 10 mins until tender. Drain, rinse under cold running water, then leave the noodles to drain thoroughly.
2 In the same bowl, lightly squash the cherry tomatoes – we used the end of a rolling pin. Stir in the fish sauce, lime juice, sugar and diced chilli. Taste for the right balance of sweet, sour and spicy – adjust if necessary (see Tip, right).
3 Toss through the noodles, then add all the remaining ingredients, except the sliced chilli. Season and give everything a good stir, then divide the noodle salad between 6 serving dishes and sprinkle over the chilli before serving.

PER SERVING 228 kcals, protein 13g, carbs 38g, fat 1g, sat fat none, fibre 2g, sugar 6g, salt 1.6g

TIP Give the dressing a taste before you toss through the noodles.

Try adding a bit of extra grapefruit juice, if you think it needs it, or a little more fish sauce or sugar.



New way with fish

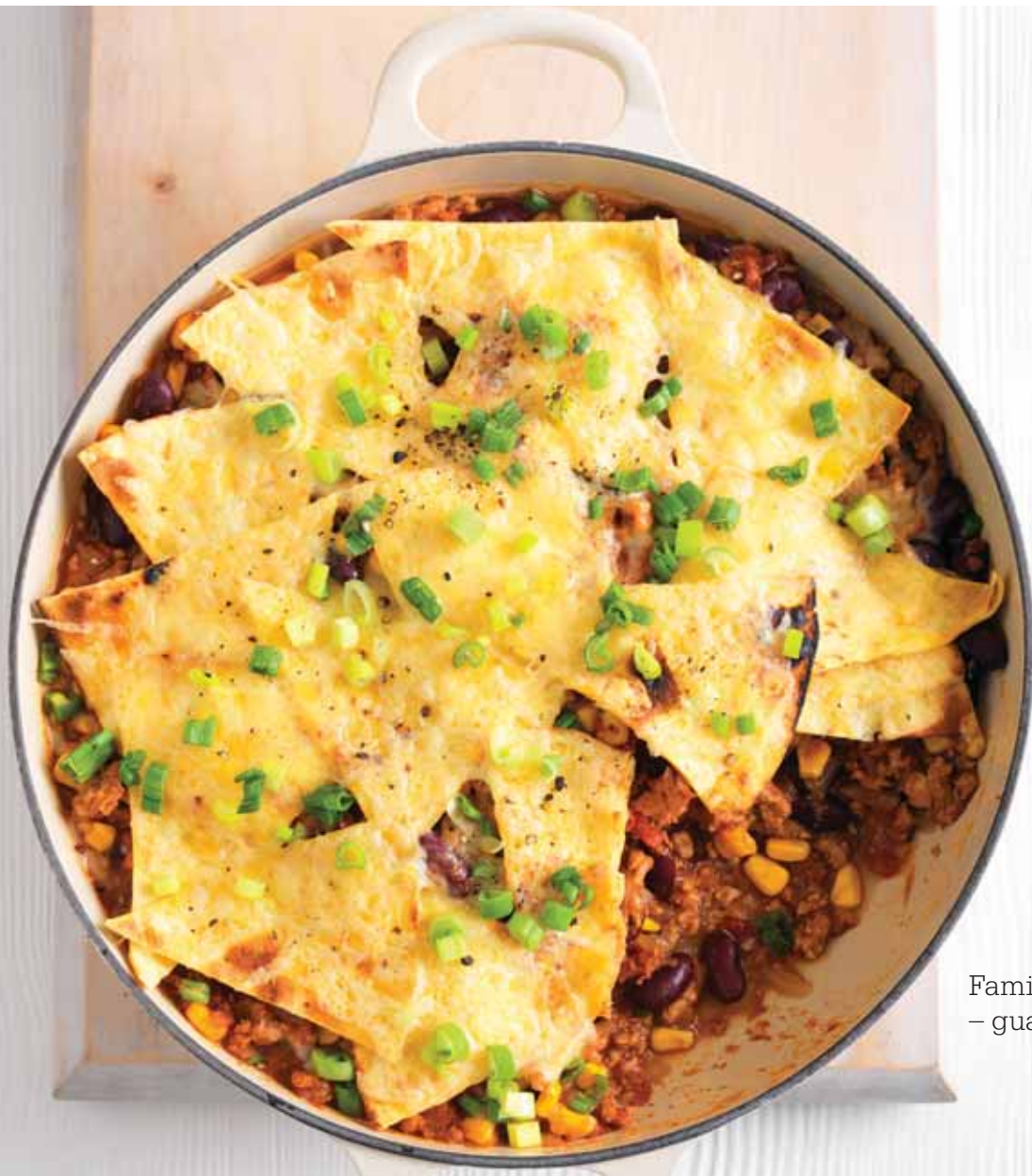
Spiced bulghur pilaf with fish

SERVES 4 ● PREP 10 MINS ● COOK 35 MINS Easy | Low cal | Low fat | Fibre | Iron | 2 of 5-a-day | Good for you

1 tbsp olive oil
2 onions, finely sliced
3 carrots, grated
2 tsp cumin seeds
2 tbsp harissa
200g bulghur wheat
6 dried apricots, chopped
700ml weak chicken stock (we made using 1 stock cube)
200g baby spinach
4 firm white fish fillets
4 thin lemon slices

1 Heat the oil in a lidded flameproof casserole dish. Tip in the onions and cook for 10 mins until soft and golden. Add the carrots and cumin, and cook for 2 mins more. Stir through the harissa, bulghur and apricots, pour over the stock and bring to the boil. Cover and simmer for 7 mins.
2 Add the spinach and stir through until just wilted. Arrange the fish fillets on top, pop a slice of lemon on each and season. Replace the lid and cook for 8 mins, keeping over a low-ish heat.
3 Turn heat to low and cook for 7-8 mins more until the fish is cooked through and the bulghur is tender. Season with pepper and serve.

PER SERVING 416 kcals, protein 37g, carbs 52g, fat 6g, sat fat 1g, fibre 7g, sugar 15g, salt 1.0g



Family favourite – guaranteed

Turkey tortilla pie

SERVES 4 ● PREP 5 MINS ● COOK 25 MINS Easy ❄ COOKED MINCE ONLY

Low cal Low fat Fibre 2 of 5-a-day

2 onions, finely chopped
1 tbsp olive oil, plus a little extra if needed
2 tsp ground cumin
500g pack turkey mince
1½ tbsp chipotle paste
400g can chopped tomatoes
400g can kidney beans, drained and rinsed
198g can sweetcorn, drained
2 corn tortillas, snipped into triangles
Small handful of grated cheddar
2 spring onions, finely sliced

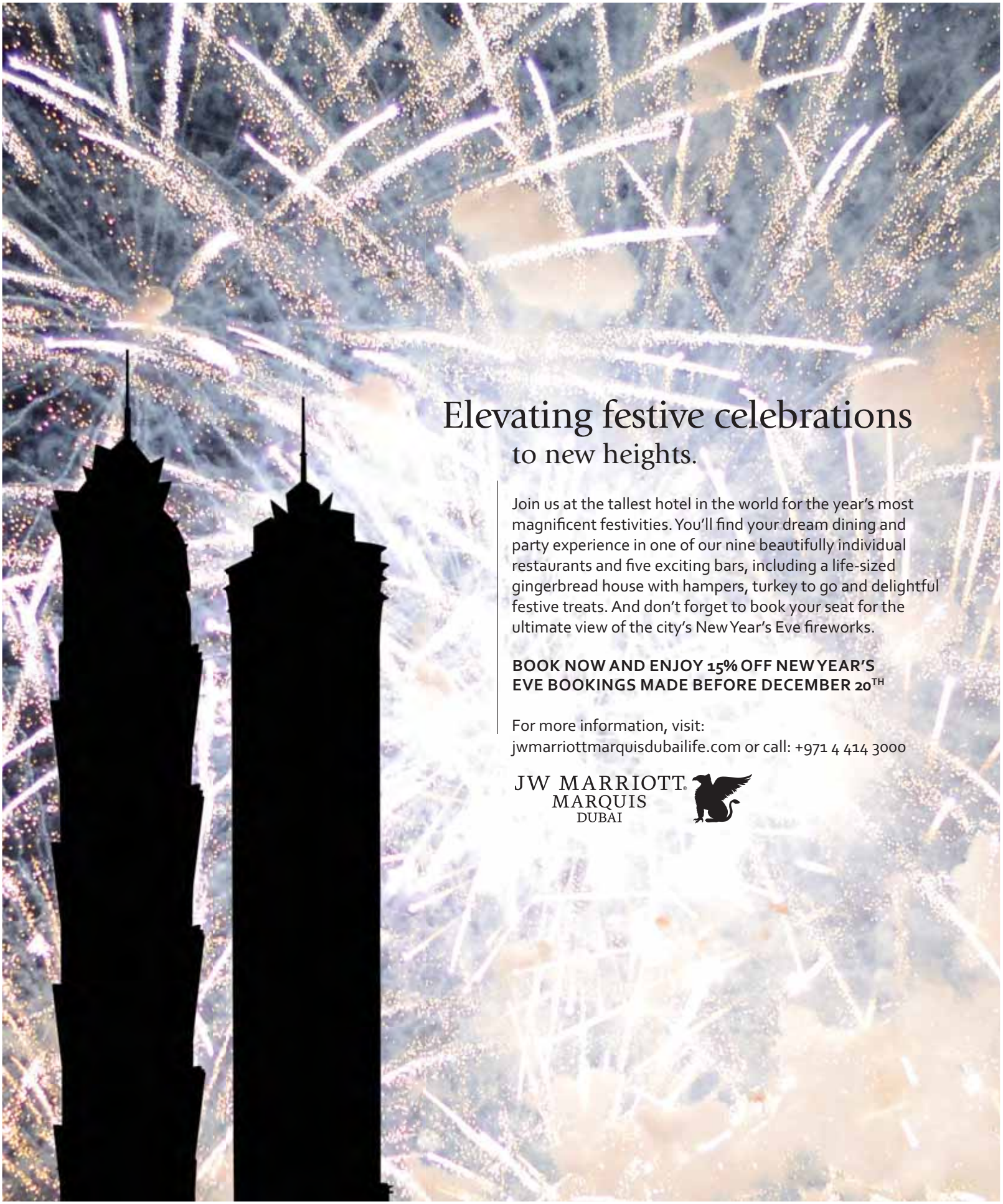
1 In a deep flameproof casserole dish, cook the onions in the oil for 8 mins until soft. Add the cumin and cook for 1 min more. Stir in the mince and add a bit more oil, if needed. Turn up the heat and cook for 4-6 mins, stirring occasionally, until the mince is browned.

2 Stir in the chipotle paste, tomatoes and half a can of water, and simmer for 5 mins. Mix in the beans and sweetcorn, and cook for a few mins more until thick, piping hot and the mince is cooked.

3 Heat the grill. Take the pan off the heat and put the tortilla triangles randomly on top. Scatter over the cheese and grill for a few mins until the topping is crisp, taking care that it doesn't burn. Sprinkle with the spring onions and serve.

PER SERVING 369 kcals, protein 42g, carbs 25g, fat 11g, sat fat 4g, fibre 6g, sugar 10g, salt 2.5g GF

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Kitchen notes

Nutrition advice, expert cooking tips and product picks for your pantry.

A stain-free festive season

Worried that the festive parties will take its toll on your lovely sofa or favourite rug? Spills are a part and parcel of the festive family gatherings, but you don't have to live with the memories forever, if you follow these quick and simple remedies for stain removal from ServiceMaster Clean, the expert cleaning company:

1 As soon as cranberry sauce or pudding causes a stain, scrape away the excess sauce, apply a little white vinegar to a dry cloth and rub the stain in a sponging action. Apply a teaspoon of soap flakes (mixed with a mug of warm water) and dab the white vinegar again, followed by the soap solution. Rinse with water and dry.

2 To remove wine stains, allow kitchen towels to absorb as much as possible, then dampen the area with a light spray of water. Absorb again and sprinkle talcum powder. Cover with kitchen paper, a piece of cling film and a heavy book. Leave for 12 hours and then vacuum.

3 Gravy stains must be scraped immediately, dabbed with the soap flake mixture and left to sit for three mins. Once rested, absorb the soap mix with a clean white cotton cloth and repeat until no transfer is visible. Rinse with clean water and dry with a hair dryer.



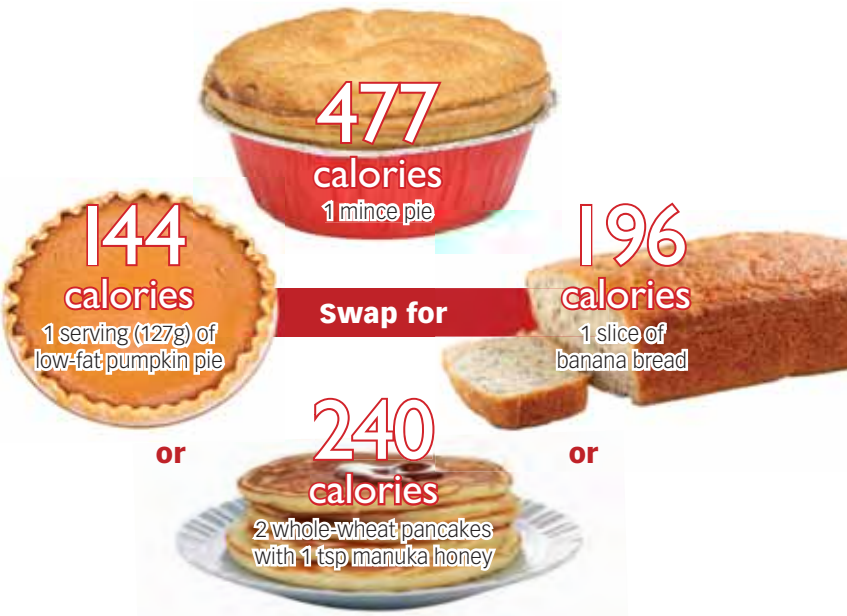
Reader tip of the month

When boiling rice, add a little white vinegar to prevent the rice grains from sticking to each other.

- Shiraz Ali

Got a great tip you want to share?
Get in touch with us on facebook or twitter

SMART FOOD SWAPS



Health update> EATING WELL ON THE GO

Find it hard to eat well on busy days? Here Laura Smith, head nutritionist at Kcal, shares her golden rules for making sure you don't reach for junk food and stick to healthy treats to give you energy.

- Prepare meals in advance for lunch, dinner and snack-time as well. A bag of almonds and walnuts, berries, avocados and olives are ideal snacks, which maintain blood sugar and fight fatigue.
- Eat breakfast! Steel cut oats, scrambled eggs or an omelette are all great breakfast items which keep you full for longer.
- Nibble on cottage cheese, nuts, seeds, low-fat yoghurt or berries every two to three hours.
- Stick to a low-sugar diet and choose protein such as salmon, vegetables, grilled chicken and salad for dinner.

INGREDIENT FOCUS: Lovely **leeks**



This versatile vegetable is in season now, and we're stocking up on them to use in winter dishes. Packed with antioxidants, minerals and vitamins, leeks, which have a spring onion-like texture, are low in calories – they contain just 61 calories in 100g of fresh stalks – and can be eaten roasted with olive oil, sautéed with fresh lemon juice and thyme, stir-fried, and used in baked dishes. Available at all leading supermarkets.

Look what we found!

3 great new products for your kitchen



These Monin white chocolate and caramel flavoured sauces are great drizzled over ice cream and puddings. From Dhs32 for 500ml at Market and Platters.

Snack on these Fruitality-Apricots from Mani Foods or eat them chopped in a fruit salad. Dhs24.50 at leading supermarkets.



Tamaya juices from Chile contain 100 per cent juice from pressed fruit and come in delicious flavours such as Sauvignon, Moscatel, and Chilean Carica. Dhs24 at Milk and Honey.

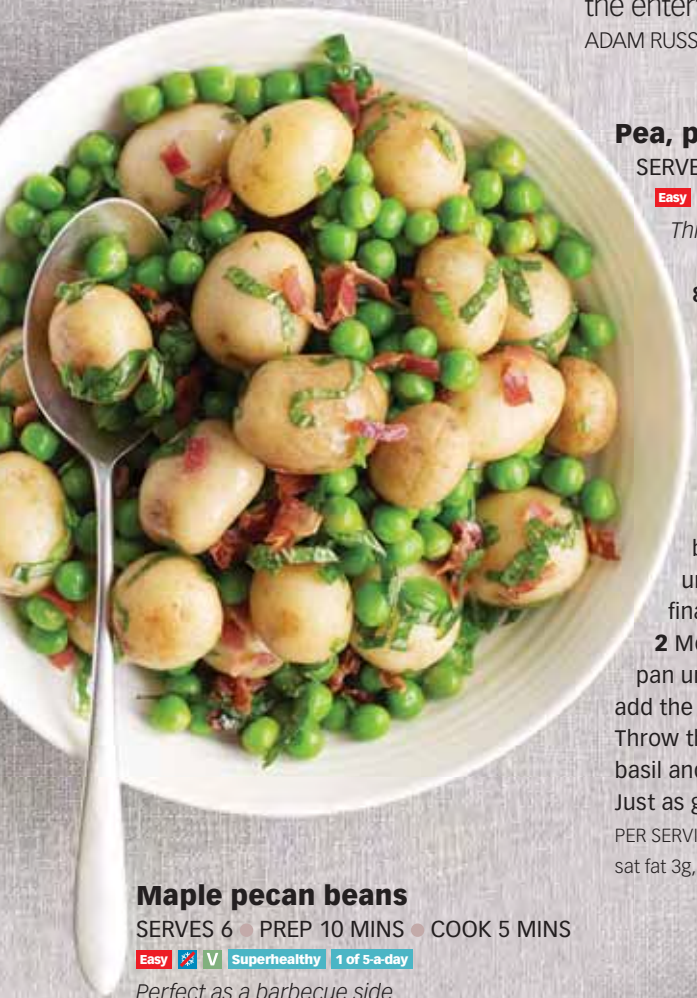


Compiled by NICOLA MONTEATH | Photographs SUPPLIED, PHOTOS.COM

Simple sides

Whether you're planning a party or bringing a dish to a BBQ, these side dishes will become your go-to recipes for the entertaining season. Recipes ADAM RUSSELL Photographs WILL HEAP





Pea, pancetta & potato salad

SERVES 6 ● PREP 5 MINS ● COOK 10 MINS

Easy | P | Low fat | Good for you

This salad is good with chicken dishes

800g baby new potatoes
300g frozen peas
140g pancetta di cubetti
juice of ½ lemon
Handful each of basil and mint, chopped

1 Cook the potatoes in a large pan of boiling salted water for 8 mins, or until tender, adding the peas for the final min of cooking. Drain.
2 Meanwhile, fry the pancetta in a frying pan until crisp. Remove from the heat and add the lemon juice and some seasoning. Throw the potatoes, peas, basil and mint into the pan and stir together. Just as good served hot or cool.

PER SERVING 203 kcals, protein 10g, carbs 27g, fat 7g, sat fat 3g, fibre 4g, sugar 3g, salt 1.23g

Pistachio pilau rice

SERVES 6 ● PREP 5 MINS ● COOK 20 MINS

Easy | V | Low fat | Good for you

Great with curried or tandoori lamb

1 onion, sliced
1 tbsp vegetable oil
1 tsp turmeric
300g basmati rice
600ml hot vegetable stock
Bunch of spring onions, sliced
50g pistachios, roughly chopped

1 Fry the onion in the oil in a large frying pan or saucepan until softened. Stir in the turmeric, then the rice, and keep stirring until the grains are golden.
2 Pour in the hot stock, bring to the boil, then reduce the heat, cover and cook for 15 mins until the rice is tender. Remove from the heat and stir through the spring onions, pistachios and some seasoning before serving hot, or allowing to cool.

PER SERVING 255 kcals, protein 6g, carbs 45g, fat 7g, sat fat 1g, fibre 2g, sugar 3g, salt 0.25g GF

Maple pecan beans

SERVES 6 ● PREP 10 MINS ● COOK 5 MINS

Easy | V | Superhealthy | 1 of 5-a-day

Perfect as a barbecue side

600g green beans
3 tbsp maple syrup
juice of ½ lemon
85g pecan nuts, roughly chopped

Cook the beans in a large pan of boiling water for 3 mins. Drain and return to the pan. Drizzle over the maple syrup and lemon juice, season, then stir through the pecan nuts. Serve warm or cold.

PER SERVING 141 kcals, protein 3g, carbs 9g, fat 10g, sat fat 1g, fibre 3g, sugar 8g, salt trace

Can be served warm or cold



Food styling CAROL TENNANT | Styling LISA HARRISON

where will you be at the stroke of midnight?



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The perfect Christmas menu

With stylish starters, mains to suit everyone, easy sides and desserts with a twist, this is your Christmas dinner sorted.

Smart starters

Giant smoked salmon & beetroot blini

MAKES 3 GIANT BLINIS, EACH CUTS INTO 8 SLICES ● PREP 35 MINS PLUS COOLING ● COOK 10 MINS A little effort

You can serve this pretty starter in slices or cut into squares as canapés. You could also make individual blinis about 10cm wide and serve them as a stylish plated first course.

200g tub crème fraîche
2 tbsp horseradish sauce
Zest of 1 lemon, juice of ½, plus wedges to serve
140g cooked beetroot (not in vinegar), drained and finely diced
1 tsp rapeseed oil, plus a drizzle
200g pack smoked salmon
1 tbsp small capers, drained and rinsed
Handful of rocket leaves
FOR THE BLINIS
100g buckwheat flour
100g self-raising flour
1 tsp baking powder
225ml milk
2 large eggs, separated
25g butter, melted, plus extra for cooking
Drizzle of oil, for cooking

1 First, make up the blini batter. Put the flours, baking powder, ½ tsp salt, the milk, egg yolks and melted butter in a bowl and whisk until smooth. In another bowl, whisk the egg whites until they hold stiff peaks. Stir a good spoonful of the whisked whites into the batter to loosen the mixture, then add the remaining egg whites and carefully fold everything together with a big metal spoon.
2 Heat a small knob of butter and a drizzle of oil in a large frying pan, roughly 23cm wide across the base. Pour a third of the blini mixture in the pan, using your spoon to encourage the batter towards the edge of the pan. Leave to cook for a few mins, until the blini starts to set around the edges and the underside is golden brown. Slide onto a plate, then carefully flip back into the pan and cook for a further 1-2 mins until golden. Repeat with the remaining mixture. Leave the blinis to cool on a wire rack, then place on a plate, separated by a layer of baking parchment and covered with cling film. *The blinis will keep like this for 24 hrs.*
3 Mix the crème fraîche, horseradish, most of the lemon zest, a good squeeze of lemon juice and some seasoning in a bowl. In a second bowl, toss the beetroot, oil and a squeeze of lemon juice. Set aside until ready to serve.
4 Place each blini on a board or large plate. Spoon on dollops of crème fraîche, arrange slices of salmon over and scatter beetroot, capers and the remaining lemon zest on top. Finish with a few rocket leaves and a drizzle of oil. Cut and serve with lemon wedges.

PER SERVING (8) 300 kcals, protein 13g, carbs 21g, fat 18g, sat fat 10g, fibre 2g, sugar 4g, salt 2.2g

Scandi-style with a twist



Food styling LIZZIE HARRIS | Styling JENNY IGGLEDEN | Photography DAVID MEHNS



Baked Camembert pie for sharing

SERVES 6-8 ● PREP 15 MINS ● COOK 20-25 MINS A little effort V

375g pack puff pastry (all-butter is tastiest)
Plain flour, for dusting
5 tbsp quince jelly, or cranberry sauce or jelly
250g whole round Camembert, Brie or other similar whole cheese
1 egg, beaten
Sesame seeds (optional)

1 Heat oven to 220C/200C fan. Halve the pastry, then roll out each half on a lightly floured surface to just over 3mm thickness. In the centre of 1 pastry sheet, spread the jelly into a circle roughly the same size as the cheese. Sit the cheese on top.
2 Brush the pastry around the cheese with some beaten egg. Lift the second sheet of pastry on top and gently press over the cheese, squeezing out the air as you go, then seal it all the way around – press down with your fingers over all the excess pastry to seal really well. Use scissors to cut away excess pastry, leaving about a 4cm border around the cheese. Use the prongs of a fork to press the edges – this looks pretty and seals the pastry even more. Lift onto a baking tray lined with baking parchment. Brush all over with egg, then add a sesame-seed star, if you like.
3 Bake for 20-25 mins until the pastry is brown, crisp and well risen around the edges – if your star is getting too dark, cover with a square of foil after 20 mins. Sit for 5 mins before cutting and catching the cheesy centre as it oozes out.

PER SERVING (6) 285 kcals, protein 12g, carbs 16g, fat 19g, sat fat 12g, fibre 1g, sugar 5g, salt 0.8g



TO MAKE PROSCIUTTO TWISTS P

Cut **2 slices of prosciutto** into strips and wrap around **4 grissini breadsticks**.

A sharp salad is perfect before a rich meal

Pear & Manchego salad

SERVES 2 ● PREP 15 MINS ● COOK 5 MINS Easy V 1 of 5-a-day

This speedy starter is a great option when you haven't got much time – to make it even quicker, you could prepare the rosemary honey and the hazelnut crumb in advance. This serves two but it can easily be upped for more or made into a big salad for a buffet.

1 tbsp good-quality clear honey
2 rosemary sprigs
2 tsp olive oil, plus a drizzle for toasting the nuts
2 tbsp blanched hazelnuts
Zest of ¼ lemon
1 tsp balsamic vinegar
75g mixed leaves (we used red chicory, watercress and rocket)
1 ripe pear, halved, cored and thinly sliced
25g Manchego (or a vegetarian hard cheese)

1 Heat the honey and rosemary in a small pan with 1 tbsp boiling water. Bring to a simmer and let it bubble for around 30 secs. Remove from the heat and allow to infuse.
2 Heat a frying pan and drizzle in a little oil. Add the hazelnuts and toast until golden and starting to char a little here and there. Remove from the pan, allow to cool, then chop roughly to make a rustic crumb. Mix with the lemon zest and some seasoning.
3 To make a dressing, combine the olive oil and balsamic vinegar with some seasoning. Toss the salad leaves in most of the dressing, then arrange on serving plates or a platter, layering the leaves with the pear slices. Top with shavings of Manchego and the hazelnut crumb, then drizzle over some of the rosemary honey and the remaining dressing. Serve with Prosciutto twists for the meat-eaters, if you like.

PER SERVING 261 kcals, protein 6g, carbs 16g, fat 19g, sat fat 5g, fibre 4g, sugar 16g, salt 0.3g >>



Succulent and full of flavour

Food styling MARINA FILIPPELLI | Styling VICTORIA ALLEN

A magnificent main course

Turkey crown with chorizo stuffing

SERVES 8 ● PREP 30 MINS ● COOK ABOUT 1 HR 20 MINS A little effort P

Christmas food should be impressive and delicious, but if you find a whole turkey daunting to prepare, or don't think you'll get through an entire bird, this juicy turkey crown will be perfect for you – and it's as easy to carve as any boneless joint of meat.

Approx 2kg boned turkey crown
1 tsp smoked paprika (sometimes called pimentón)
25g butter, softened
FOR THE STUFFING
2 tbsp mild olive oil
1 large onion, finely chopped
2 celery sticks, finely chopped
6 rashers streaky bacon, chopped
100g good-quality chorizo or beef sausages (not sliced), peeled and cut into small chunks
85g good-quality breadcrumbs
20g pack flat-leaf parsley, roughly chopped

1 To make the stuffing, heat the oil in a large non-stick pan, then add the onion and celery. Cover and cook very gently for 15 mins or until soft. Tip into a bowl. Add the bacon to the pan, turn up the heat and fry for 2 mins. Add the chorizo and fry until both are crisp and have released their oils. Tip onto the onion mix. Stir in the breadcrumbs and parsley, season generously, then stir until everything is well mixed. *Can be made up to 2 days ahead.*

2 Heat oven to 200C/fan 180C. Put the crown skin-side down on a board, with widest end away from you, then pull the skin away from the flesh along the cleavage in the middle where the two fillets meet. You want to make a sort of pocket, running along the length of the meat.

3 Pack the stuffing into the space between the skin and the meat. Roll the two sides of the crown in towards the middle, then pull the skin at the top over and secure it with a skewer. Do the same at the bottom, then skewer in the middle too, to secure. Turn it over – it should look like a slightly heart-shaped, completely wrapped joint at this stage. Weigh the turkey now, and work out the cooking time – 40 mins per kg.

4 Put the turkey stuffing-side up into a large roasting tin. Beat the paprika into the butter, season, then brush some over the bird. Cover with a loose tent of foil, then roast, brushing with butter every so often. You will have some butter left, but keep it for the gravy (see next page). When done, lift the golden crown onto a board, carefully pull out the skewers (remember to wear oven gloves if you've used metal ones), then leave to rest. The crown will stay hot for about 1 hr. Don't wash up the roasting tin as you'll need it for the gravy.

PER SERVING 481 kcals, protein 59g, carbs 11g, fat 21g, sat fat 8g, fibre 1g, sugar 2g, salt 1.20g

WHAT IS A TURKEY CROWN Essentially it is both breasts, with the skin on, and not much else. Sometimes the wings are left on – if they are, just cut them away carefully from the meaty side, taking care not to damage the skin. The skin is your best friend here and will hold the whole thing together – so trim it off. When you buy a turkey crown, you tend to pay for the legs as well, so make sure you ask for the legs to be included separately; they'll make a fantastic stew or curry and you can always stash them in the freezer.



Tasty trimmings

Saffron roast potatoes with garlic

SERVES 8 ● PREP 10 MINS ● COOK 1 HR 20 MINS Easy V Good for you

Serve everyone a couple of roasted garlic cloves to squeeze over the potatoes.

About 1.5kg potatoes, cut into big chunks
Small pinch of saffron
About 4 tbsp olive oil
2 whole garlic bulbs, broken into cloves

1 Boil the potatoes for 10 mins, putting half the saffron in the water – they will turn yellowy. Drain, steam-dry for a few mins, then put the lid on the pan and shake the potatoes about a few times to fluff up the edges. Put the oil in a large roasting tin and put in the oven to heat above the turkey.

2 Season the potatoes well, scatter with the remaining saffron, then very carefully toss in the hot oil. Roast for 1 hr at the same temperature as the turkey. When you remove the turkey to rest, turn the oven up to 220C/fan 200C, add the garlic to the pan and roast for 20 mins more until the potatoes are crisp and golden and the garlic is soft.

PER SERVING 196 kcals, protein 4g, carbs 33g, fat 6g, sat fat 1g, fibre 3g, sugar 1g, salt 0.03g >>



Almond & bread sauce

SERVES 8 ● PREP 10 MINS PLUS INFUSING ● COOK 5 MINS Easy ❄ V

6 black peppercorns
1 onion, peeled and cut into quarters
600ml full-fat milk (you will need a drop more if making ahead)
2 garlic cloves
100g blanched almonds, roughly chopped
140g breadcrumbs
Good knob of butter
Drizzle of extra virgin olive oil, plus extra to serve

1 Put the peppercorns, onion, milk and garlic into a pan, bring to the boil, then leave to infuse off the heat for 30 mins. Strain, fish out the peppercorns and return the milk, onion and garlic to the pan.
2 Tip in the almonds, then whizz with a stick blender in the pan until smooth. Stir in the breadcrumbs and heat for a few mins until just thickened. Stir in the butter and oil, allowing the butter to melt into the sauce. Season to taste. *The sauce can be made up to 2 days ahead and kept chilled.*
3 When ready to serve, add a splash more milk to the sauce if it's gone a bit thick, then reheat gently, stirring. Serve with a swirl more olive oil on the top.

PER SERVING 220 kcals, protein 7g, carbs 19g, fat 13g, sat fat 4g, fibre 2g, sugar 5g, salt 0.45g

GETTING AHEAD

All the recipes can be made or prepped well in advance

- Make cranberry sauce up to 3 days ahead and bread sauce up to 2 days ahead
- Make the stuffing up to 2 days ahead
- Prep and stuff the crown up to a day ahead
- On the day, roast the potatoes at the same temperature as the turkey
- While the turkey rests, turn the potatoes up to crisp, and make the gravy
- Warm up the bread sauce just before serving, adding a splash more milk, then dress with olive oil

Easy sherry gravy

SERVES 8 (MAKES ABOUT 300ML)
● PREP 2 MINS ● COOK 15 MINS Easy ❄

juices in the roasting tin
1 tbsp paprika butter
1 tbsp plain flour
150ml fino sherry
500ml good chicken stock

1 Tip the juices from the tin into a jug and set aside.
2 Mix the spicy butter and flour together, then add to the pan and cook for 2 mins until the flour smells biscuity. Tip in the sherry, whisking as you go, then boil until it has reduced by two-thirds. Now tip in the meat juices and stock and reduce again by about half. Season and keep warm.
3 Soak up any orangey fat that comes to the top using a few sheets of kitchen paper – this is just the fat from the chorizo and bacon in the roasting juices.

PER SERVING 56 kcals, protein 3g, carbs 3g, fat 3g, sat fat 1g, fibre none, sugar 1g, salt 0.36g

Cranberry & currant sauce

SERVES 8 ● PREP 5 MINS ● COOK ABOUT 15 MINS Easy ❄ V Low fat

This sweet, sour and ever-so-slightly spicy sauce will really tickle your tastebuds.

2 tbsp sunflower or vegetable oil
1 red onion, thinly sliced
100g golden caster sugar
2 tbsp currants
Finger-length cinnamon stick
300g frozen cranberries, defrosted
175ml white wine

1 Heat the oil in a saucepan, then add the onion and heat gently for 5 mins. Turn up the heat and stir for 2 mins to add a little colour, then tip in the sugar, currants and cinnamon stick. Stir over the heat until the sugar has dissolved and starts to turn golden.
2 Tip in the cranberries and wine, stir well and season, then simmer for about 5-7 mins until the berries have popped but not completely collapsed, and you have a thickish sauce. It will thicken more on standing.

PER SERVING 103 kcals, protein none, carbs 18g, fat 3g, sat fat none, fibre 1g, sugar 18g, salt 0.02g >>

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Food styling JENNIFER JOYCE | Styling REBECCA NEWPORT

Veggie treat

Golden-glazed carrot, mushroom & hazelnut tart

SERVES 1 EASILY INCREASED TO SERVE MORE ● PREP 15 MINS ● COOK 50 MINS Easy V Folate Fibre 2 of 5-a-day

A vegetarian main course option

3 carrots, peeled and cut in half lengthways, or about 10 baby carrots left whole
2 tsp olive oil
1 tbsp maple syrup
15 x 12cm rectangle of all-butter puff pastry from a 320g roll
1 banana shallot, or 2 normal shallots, very finely diced
Small knob of butter
140g chestnut mushrooms, very finely chopped
1 tbsp chopped roasted hazelnuts, plus a little extra to garnish
3 tbsp low-fat cream cheese
A few tarragon leaves, chopped, plus a few more to garnish

1 Heat oven to 200C/180C fan. Pop the carrots in a pan of boiling water and cook for 4-5 mins until tender. Spread the carrots out in one layer on a baking tray. Carefully toss with olive oil, seasoning and half the maple syrup. Bake for 20 mins, turning once.
2 Next, place the pastry rectangle on a baking parchment-lined baking sheet. Score a 1cm border. Prick the centre area with a fork and put in the oven for 12 mins with the carrots.
3 Fry the shallot in butter until totally soft, then stir through the mushrooms. Fry for several mins until mushrooms are tender and the mixture is dry. Spread out on a plate to cool. Whizz a third of the mushroom mixture with the nuts, cream cheese, tarragon and seasoning, so you have a coarse texture. Tip into a bowl and stir through the remaining mushroom mix.
4 Remove the pastry base from the oven and gently press down the centre area with the back of a spoon. Spread the mushroom mix inside and lay the glazed carrots on top. You may need to tuck the ends round to fit the carrots in. Drizzle over the remaining maple syrup and bake for a further 12-15 mins until the pastry is golden. Sprinkle with a few tarragon leaves and some more chopped nuts to serve.

PER SERVING 702 kcals, protein 14g, carbs 56g, fat 47g, sat fat 22g, fibre 11g, sugar 29g, salt 1.4g >>

TIP Make the mushroom mixture ahead of time and store in the fridge, or assemble the tart up to the middle of step 4, just before you drizzle with more maple syrup, and chill for up to a day.



With the festive season fast approaching, Emirates Golf Club are proud to announce an exciting range of packages and events that are sure to brighten up this special time of year. Whether you wish to enjoy an intimate gathering, welcome in the New Year in superb surroundings or just need a helping hand in the kitchen, we guarantee an unforgettable festive experience.

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Puds with wow factor



GET AHEAD

The butter can be made 2 days ahead and kept in the fridge.

Persian pudding with whipped rose & honey butter

SERVES 8 ● PREP 40 MINS ● COOK 4HR 30 MINS A little effort ❄

Give your Christmas pudding a Middle Eastern twist in a nod to where we live.

250g pitted dates, roughly chopped
300g raisins
100g mixed peel
50g whole almonds
50g shelled pistachios
175g light muscovado sugar
175g white breadcrumbs
1 tsp mixed spice
½ tsp ground ginger
125g self-raising flour
Zest of 2 oranges
1 tbsp each orange water and rose water
2 large eggs, beaten
175g melted butter, plus extra for greasing
FOR THE ROSE & HONEY BUTTER
125g soft butter
2 tbsp icing sugar, plus extra to serve
50g clear honey
Pinch of cinnamon
1 tsp rose water

1 Tip the dates into a bowl with the raisins, cover with 200ml hot water from the kettle and set aside.
2 Meanwhile, grease a 1.5 litre pudding basin and line the base with a disk of parchment paper. Put the dry ingredients and orange zest in a large bowl. Stir in the dates and raisins (and soaking liquid), the rose and orange water, with the eggs and butter. Mix until everything is combined. Tip into the basin and cover with a circle of parchment paper, then foil, then tie the rim with string.
3 Place the pudding on an upturned jar lid in a large pan and pour in hot water from the kettle until it comes halfway up the bowl. Cover the pan and gently steam for 4 hrs, topping up with more water if needed. *The pudding can be eaten straight away, chilled and kept for up to a week, or frozen for 1 month.* To reheat, defrost completely or remove from the fridge and steam pud again for 30 mins until piping hot.
4 To make the butter, whisk the ingredients together. Serve the pudding in wedges with a spoonful of the butter melting over it.

PER SERVING 776 kcals, protein 11g, carbs 106g, fat 35g, sat fat 18g, fibre 6g, sugar 80g, salt 1.2g



Iced choca-mocha terrine

SERVES 8 ● PREP 30 MINS, PLUS FREEZING ● COOK 5 MINS Easy ❄

Sunflower oil, for greasing
1 tbsp instant coffee
150g golden caster sugar
4 tbsp coffee liqueur (optional)
200ml double cream
250g mascarpone
15 chocolate mini rolls, 12 halved down the middle, 3 left whole
Cocoa powder, for dusting

1 Grease a 900g loaf tin with oil and line with a double layer of cling film. Put the coffee, sugar and 125ml water in a pan, and bring to the boil. When the sugar has dissolved, remove the syrup from the heat. Set aside to cool.
2 Whisk the double cream until it just holds its shape. Fold through the mascarpone, and then the coffee syrup. To assemble the terrine, press half the halved mini rolls into the tin, cut-side down, trimming them to fit. Tip half the cream into the terrine, then line the whole mini rolls down the middle. Top with the rest of the coffee cream and press the other half of the cut mini rolls into the cream, cut-side up. Wrap with the cling film and press down gently to push the top layer of rolls into the cream, then freeze.
3 Before serving, remove the terrine from the freezer and place in the fridge for 1 hr, then turn out onto a chilled serving dish. Dust heavily with cocoa powder before cutting into slices.

PER SERVING 470 kcals, protein 4g, carbs 40g, fat 33g, sat fat 19g, fibre 1g, sugar 36g, salt 0.4g GF

Food styling LIZZIE HARRIS | Styling JENNY IGGLEDEN, SUE ROWLANDS

John Torode's buffet for a crowd



BBC MasterChef John Torode creates a fabulous buffet menu that looks impressive, but the dishes are all great value. Photographs DAVID MUNNS

Festive buffet for 12

Salmon & herby potato coulibiacs

Spinach & ricotta slice

Beetroot & squash salad with horseradish cream

Baby Gem lettuce with Marie Rose dressing

Chocolate Jaffa pots

Beetroot & squash salad with horseradish cream

SERVES 12 ● PREP 30 MINS ● COOK 45 MINS Easy V Low fat Folate 2 of 5-a-day

1kg raw beetroot
6 red onions
1.25kg large butternut squash, peeled and deseeded
2 tbsp red wine vinegar
1 tbsp soft brown sugar
50ml olive oil
FOR THE HORSERADISH CREAM
175ml soured cream
3 tbsp creamed horseradish
Juice of 1 lemon
85g watercress, large stalks removed

1 Heat oven to 200C/180C fan. Peel the beetroot and cut each into 8 wedges. Cut the onions and butternut squash into roughly the same size. Spread out in a large roasting tin. Mix the vinegar and sugar until dissolved, then whisk in the oil. Pour over the vegetables, toss and roast for 40-45 mins until charred and soft, stirring halfway through cooking.
2 To make the horseradish cream, mix together the soured cream, horseradish, lemon juice and some seasoning.
3 To serve, put the roasted veg in a large bowl or on a platter, followed by the watercress, then drizzle over the horseradish cream. Serve warm or cold.

PER SERVING 171 kcals, protein 4g, carbs 21g, fat 8g, sat fat 3g, fibre 4g, sugar 16g, salt 0.3g

Salmon & herby potato coulibiacs

MAKES 2, EACH SERVES 6 ● PREP 45 MINS PLUS CHILLING ● COOK 1 HR

A little effort Omega-3

600g potatoes, thinly sliced
1 large onion, thinly sliced
1 tbsp olive oil
100ml double cream
100ml crème fraîche
4 tbsp each chopped parsley and dill
Zest of 1 lemon
2 x 375g packs all-butter puff pastry
A little flour, for dusting
650g side of salmon, skinned and pin-boned, cut crossways into 3cm slices, then cut in half lengthways to get thick fingers
1 egg, beaten

1 Heat oven to 180C/160C fan. Par-boil the potato slices for 2-3 mins. Drain and set aside in a large bowl.
2 Gently fry the onion in the oil for 10 mins until lightly golden. Cool slightly, then stir in the cream, crème fraîche, herbs, zest and plenty of seasoning. Pour over the potatoes and mix very gently.
3 Roll out one pack of pastry on a lightly floured surface to a 35 x 35cm, then lay on a large baking sheet. Pack ¼ of the potato mixture down one side of the pastry, leaving a 5cm border. Arrange ½ of the salmon on top to cover the potato. Cover the salmon with ¼ of the potato. Brush the pastry all the way round with beaten egg and fold over the pastry. Trim the edges and crimp with your fingers, or seal with a fork. Make decorative fish for the top, if you like.
4 Roll out the remaining pastry and repeat the process, using up the rest of the potato and salmon. Chill for 30 mins.
5 Brush the pastries all over with beaten egg. Bake for 40 mins. Leave to rest for 10 mins if serving hot, or serve cold.

PER SERVING 520 kcals, protein 18g, carbs 43g, fat 30g, sat fat 13g, fibre 2g, sugar 3g, salt 0.6g >>

Food styling LIZZIE HARRIS | Styling LUCY HARVEY



Beetroot & squash salad with horseradish cream

Salmon & herby potato coulibiacs



Spinach & ricotta slice

SERVES 12 ● PREP 45 MINS ● COOK 1 HR

A little effort | V | Calcium | Folate | 1 of 5-a-day

50g butter
1 tsp olive oil
1 onion, finely chopped
1kg spinach
¼ tsp ground nutmeg
500g ricotta
2 egg yolks
85g Parmesan (or vegetarian alternative), finely grated
2 x 375g packs all-butter puff pastry
A little flour, for dusting
1 egg, beaten

1 Heat oven to 180C/160C fan. Melt half the butter with the oil in a sauté pan. Add the onion and cook for 10 mins until softened. Remove into a bowl.
2 Add a few handfuls of spinach to the pan and cook for a few mins until it has wilted down. Remove from the heat and drain in a colander. Repeat until all the spinach is cooked. Press with the back of a spoon to remove any excess liquid. Now roughly chop and tip into the bowl with the onion. Stir in the nutmeg, ricotta, egg yolks, Parmesan and some seasoning and mix well.
3 Roll out one pack of pastry on a lightly floured surface to a 25 x 30cm rectangle, then lay on a large baking sheet. With the longest side facing you, pack the spinach mixture down the middle of the pastry, leaving a 5cm border all the way around. Brush the pastry all the way round with some beaten egg.
4 Roll out the second pack of pastry to a rectangle slightly larger than the first. Drape over the top and gently press down the edges to seal both pastry layers together. Trim the edges to neaten and crimp with your fingers, or seal down with a fork.
5 Brush all over with beaten egg and, if you like, lightly score the pastry with the back of a knife in a criss-cross fashion, making sure you don't cut all the way through. Bake for 40 mins. Leave to rest for 10 mins before serving.

PER SERVING 397 kcals, protein 14g, carbs 24g, fat 27g, sat fat 14g, fibre 3g, sugar 3g, salt 1.1g



Baby Gem lettuce with Marie Rose dressing

SERVES 12 ● PREP 10 MINS ● NO COOK

Easy | V | Good for you

This couldn't be simpler, and uses the dressing that's on a prawn cocktail!

6 Baby Gem lettuces
1 pack cress, trimmed
FOR THE DRESSING
4 tbsp mayonnaise
2 tbsp tomato ketchup
¼ tsp cayenne pepper
juice of 1 lemon

1 Separate the lettuce leaves, put on a large dish and sprinkle over the cress.
2 Combine all the dressing ingredients with a few tsp water to make a runny consistency. Drizzle over the lettuce and cress and serve.

PER SERVING 81 kcals, protein 1g, carbs 2g, fat 8g, sat fat 1g, fibre 1g, sugar 2g, salt 0.2g

GETTING AHEAD

- The Marie Rose dressing for the lettuce can be made up to 2 days ahead. Keep it chilled.
- You can prepare the chocolate pots up to 2 days ahead and keep them chilled.
- Both the salmon and spinach pastries can be made a day ahead. Glaze and bake on the morning to serve cold, or put in the oven as your guests arrive to eat warm.
- You can make the horseradish cream for the beetroot salad and roast the vegetables a day ahead, then keep them chilled until ready to dress.
- The cauliflower salad can be made a day ahead and chilled, but don't add the mint or roasted cauliflower until you are ready to serve.

Chocolate Jaffa pots

MAKES 12 ● PREP 40 MINS PLUS MACERATING, SETTING AND COOLING ● COOK 10 MINS Easy

A little goes a long way, as these are quite rich and chocolatey. If you don't have 12 same-size glasses, use an assortment of glasses, ramekins or cups.

300g Madeira cake
FOR THE CLEMENTINE JELLY
300g sugar
1 vanilla pod, split lengthways
1 cinnamon stick
200ml clementine juice (from about 4 clementines), plus 4 clementines
3 sheets leaf gelatine
FOR THE CHOCOLATE LAYER
400ml double cream
225g dark chocolate, roughly chopped
3 tbsp orange liqueur
25g butter, softened

1 To make the clementine jelly, put the sugar, vanilla pod, cinnamon stick, clementine juice and 100ml water in a large pan and bring to a gentle simmer. Meanwhile, peel the clementines and remove all the pith and outside membranes. Put the broken-up segments into a bowl and pour over the spiced sugar syrup. Cover with cling film and allow to macerate for at least 30 mins.
2 Meanwhile, cut the Madeira cake into 2cm-thick slices, trimming off and discarding the dark edges. Divide the slices between 12 glasses and push down in an even layer. Soak the gelatine leaves in cold water.
3 Drain the clementines, pouring the liquid into a small saucepan. Discard the vanilla and cinnamon stick. Divide the clementines between the glasses in an even layer. Gently warm the liquid. Once it is warm, squeeze the gelatine to remove the excess water and stir into the warm liquid until completely melted.
4 Pour a layer of the jelly over the clementines. Transfer the pots to the fridge and allow to set for at least 3 hrs.
5 To make the chocolate layer, heat the cream to just below boiling. Remove from the heat, add the chocolate and stir until melted and smooth. Add the liqueur and butter and mix until fully combined. Pour into a jug and allow to cool for 15-20 mins. Pour on top of the jelly and put back in the fridge for a few hours to set.

PER POT 494 kcals, protein 3g, carbs 54g, fat 29g, sat fat 18g, fibre 1g, sugar 50g, salt 0.3g GF

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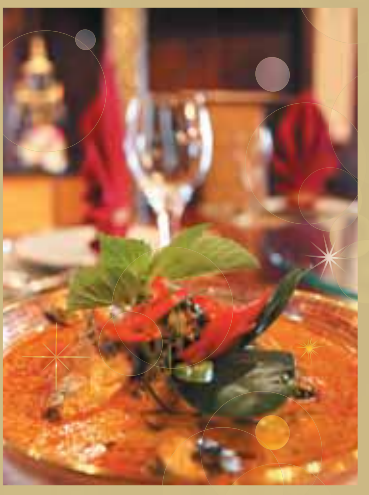
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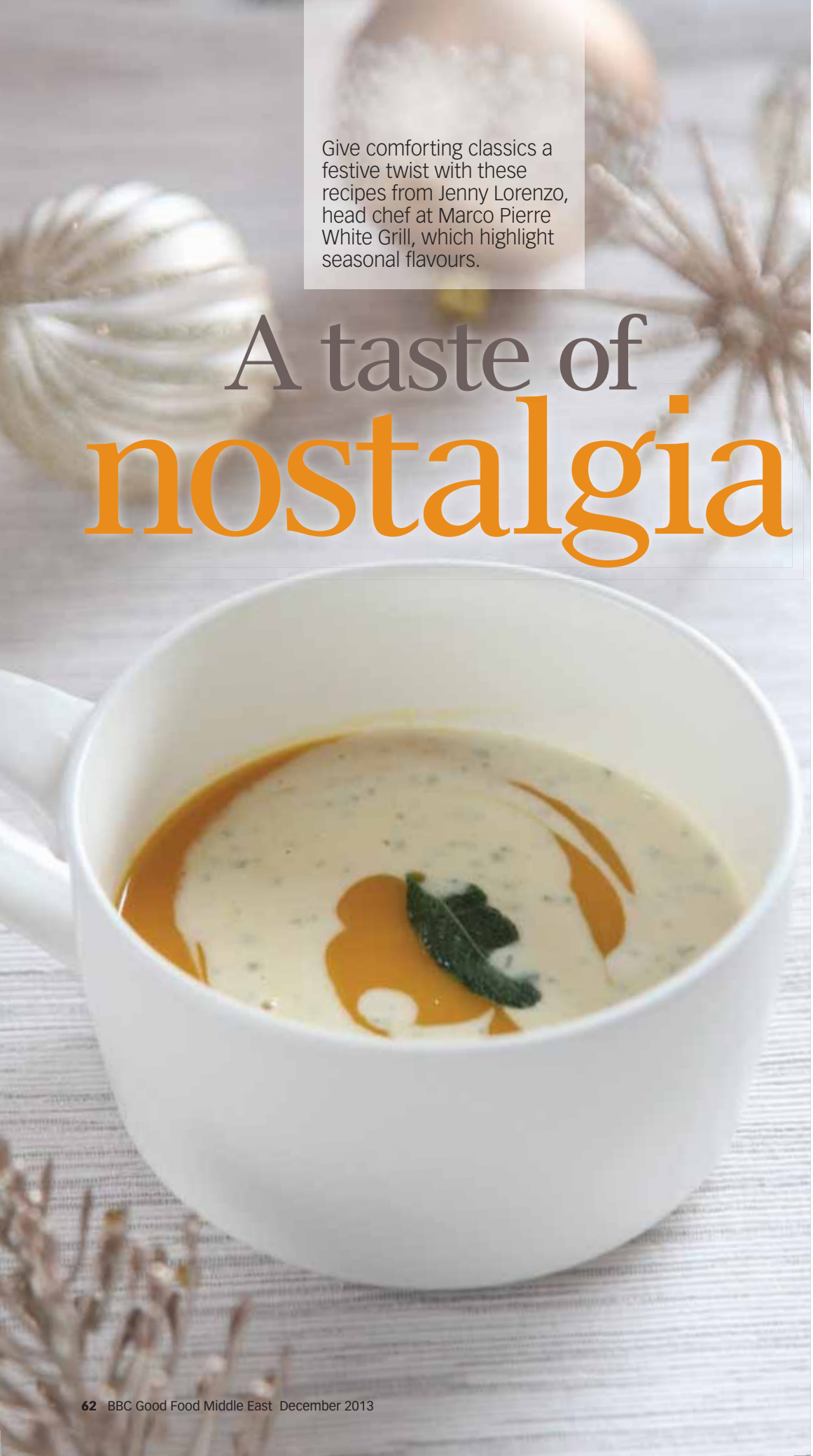
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Give comforting classics a festive twist with these recipes from Jenny Lorenzo, head chef at Marco Pierre White Grill, which highlight seasonal flavours.

A taste of nostalgia





Jenny Lorenzo, head chef at Marco Pierre White Grill at the newly opened Conrad Dubai hotel, has over 14 years of experience under her belt. Her passion for cooking began at the age of ten, when she baked her first cake. After her studies, she moved to Chicago to work at Blackbird restaurant. She has since worked in London, US and the UAE – she worked at Nautilus, Yas Island, before taking on this position at the new restaurant, helmed by celebrity chef Marco Pierre White.

Butternut squash soup

SERVES 4 ● PREP 20 MINS
● COOK 45 MINS Easy V

Olive oil, for cooking
1kg butternut squash, halved and deseeded
2 medium onions, thinly sliced
3 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
1 clove
1 small stick of cinnamon
1 bay leaf
Sprig of thyme
1.5l vegetable or chicken stock
235ml heavy cream
Salt and pepper

1 Preheat oven to 160C. Drizzle olive oil over the butternut squash and lightly season with salt on a baking sheet.
2 Roast until squash is tender when pierced with the tip of a knife, about 1 hr. Let the squash cool down, and then scoop out the meat and discard the skin. Set aside.
3 Coat the bottom of a soup pot with enough olive oil, over medium heat. Add onions and garlic and cook until tender.
4 Add the squash, clove, cinnamon stick, bay leaf, thyme and vegetable stock and bring to a simmer. Cook for a further 15 mins.
5 With a hand blender, purée the soup until smooth. Add the cream and season with salt and pepper to taste.

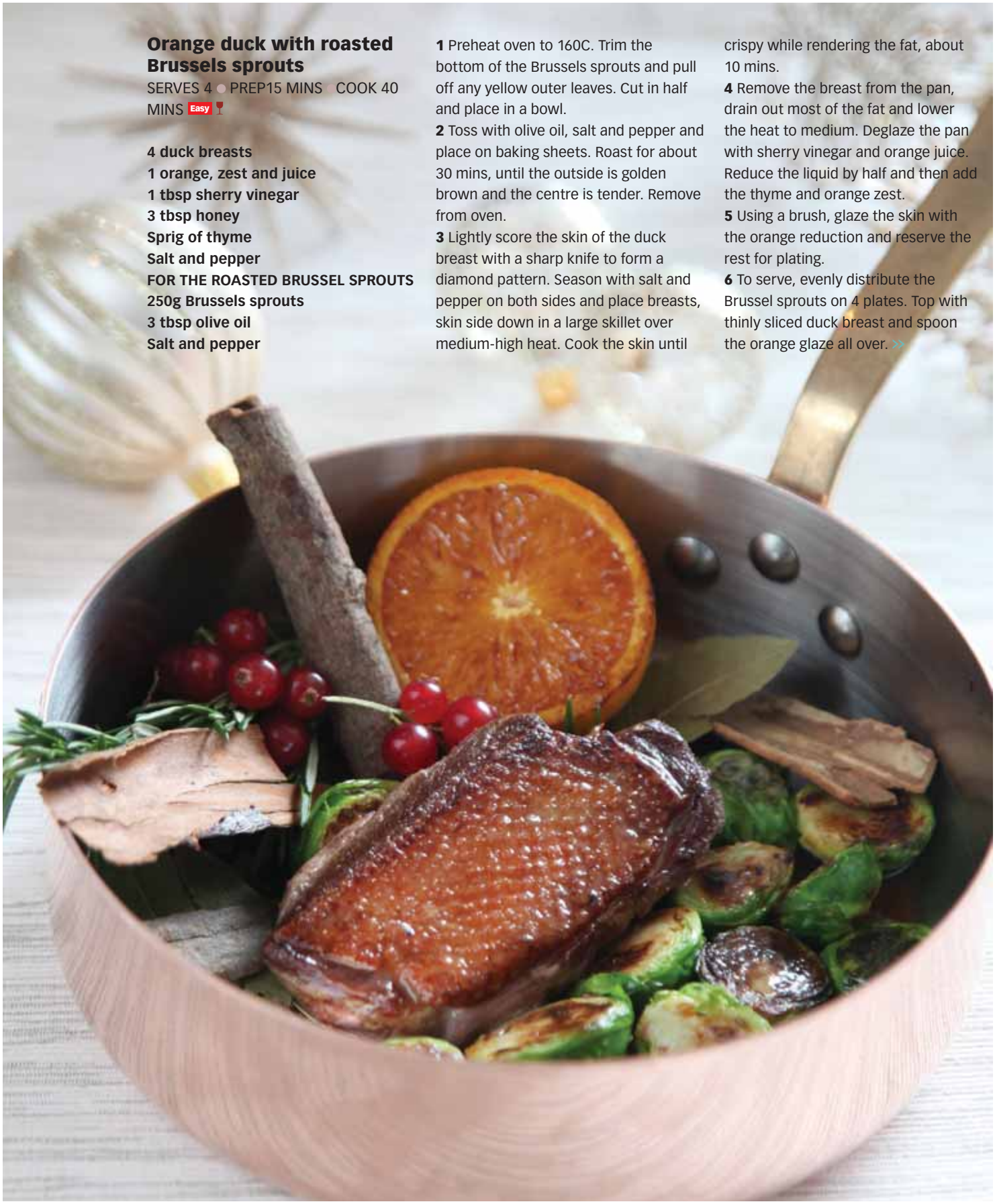
Text & styling NICOLA MONTEATH | Photographs ANAS CHERUR | Props from CRATE & BARREL

Orange duck with roasted Brussels sprouts

SERVES 4 ● PREP15 MINS ● COOK 40 MINS Easy

4 duck breasts
1 orange, zest and juice
1 tbsp sherry vinegar
3 tbsp honey
Sprig of thyme
Salt and pepper
FOR THE ROASTED BRUSSEL SPROUTS
250g Brussels sprouts
3 tbsp olive oil
Salt and pepper

1 Preheat oven to 160C. Trim the bottom of the Brussels sprouts and pull off any yellow outer leaves. Cut in half and place in a bowl.
2 Toss with olive oil, salt and pepper and place on baking sheets. Roast for about 30 mins, until the outside is golden brown and the centre is tender. Remove from oven.
3 Lightly score the skin of the duck breast with a sharp knife to form a diamond pattern. Season with salt and pepper on both sides and place breasts, skin side down in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Cook the skin until crispy while rendering the fat, about 10 mins.
4 Remove the breast from the pan, drain out most of the fat and lower the heat to medium. Deglaze the pan with sherry vinegar and orange juice. Reduce the liquid by half and then add the thyme and orange zest.
5 Using a brush, glaze the skin with the orange reduction and reserve the rest for plating.
6 To serve, evenly distribute the Brussel sprouts on 4 plates. Top with thinly sliced duck breast and spoon the orange glaze all over. >>





A warming dessert for winter

Apple and cranberry crumble

SERVES 4 · PREP 45 MINS · COOK 1 ½ HRS Easy V

235ml all-purpose flour
45g rolled oats
150g brown sugar
1 tbsp ground cinnamon
1/4 tsp ground nutmeg
170g butter, cut into small pieces
FOR THE FILLING
2 tbsp butter
4 large green apples, peeled, cored and diced to medium-size
4 tbsp sugar
20g dried cranberries
Vanilla ice cream or whipped cream, to serve

1 Combine the flour, oats, sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg and butter in a bowl.
2 Work the butter into the flour mixture, using the back of a fork, until a coarse crumble texture forms. Refrigerate until ready to use.
3 Melt butter in a pan over medium high heat, add diced apples, sugar and cranberries. Cook until the apples are tender and liquid evaporates.
4 Evenly fill 4 ramekins with the apple mixture, top with crumble mix and bake for 30 mins until golden brown and the filling is bubbly. Serve with vanilla ice cream or whipped cream. GF



FESTIVE SEASON 2013

Bonnington
JUMEIRAH LAKES TOWERS

Christmas Eve Dinner

– 24th December 2013

Spoil yourself this Christmas Eve at The Cavendish Restaurant with a fantastically prepared 5 course menu especially designed by our chefs for the occasion. Guest may choose to include a perfectly paired glass of fine grape with each course.

Christmas Day Brunch

– 24th December 2013

Christmas at the Bonnington will be a family event and of course Santa himself will be popping by with a treat for the children! This delicious Christmas Day Brunch is a very special family brunch served in the warm and inviting ambiance of The Cavendish Restaurant.

New Year's Eve Dinner

– 31st December 2013

Ring in the New Year at the Bonnington Hotel where The Cavendish Restaurant is offering a fabulous 5 course gourmet feast to remember! Guests can commence their evening with welcome drinks and then party late into the night at Healey's Bar & Terrace, where a complimentary glass of chilled bubbly awaits to toast the New Year!

New Year's Day Family Brunch

– 1st January 2014

Celebrate the start of the New Year in the elegant and comfortable surrounds of The Cavendish Restaurant. The Bonnington is hosting a special New Year's Day Family Brunch from 12:30 pm until 4 pm - this is the perfect opportunity to relax and unwind from the night before, meet with friends and family to reflect on the year gone by and plan for the year ahead.

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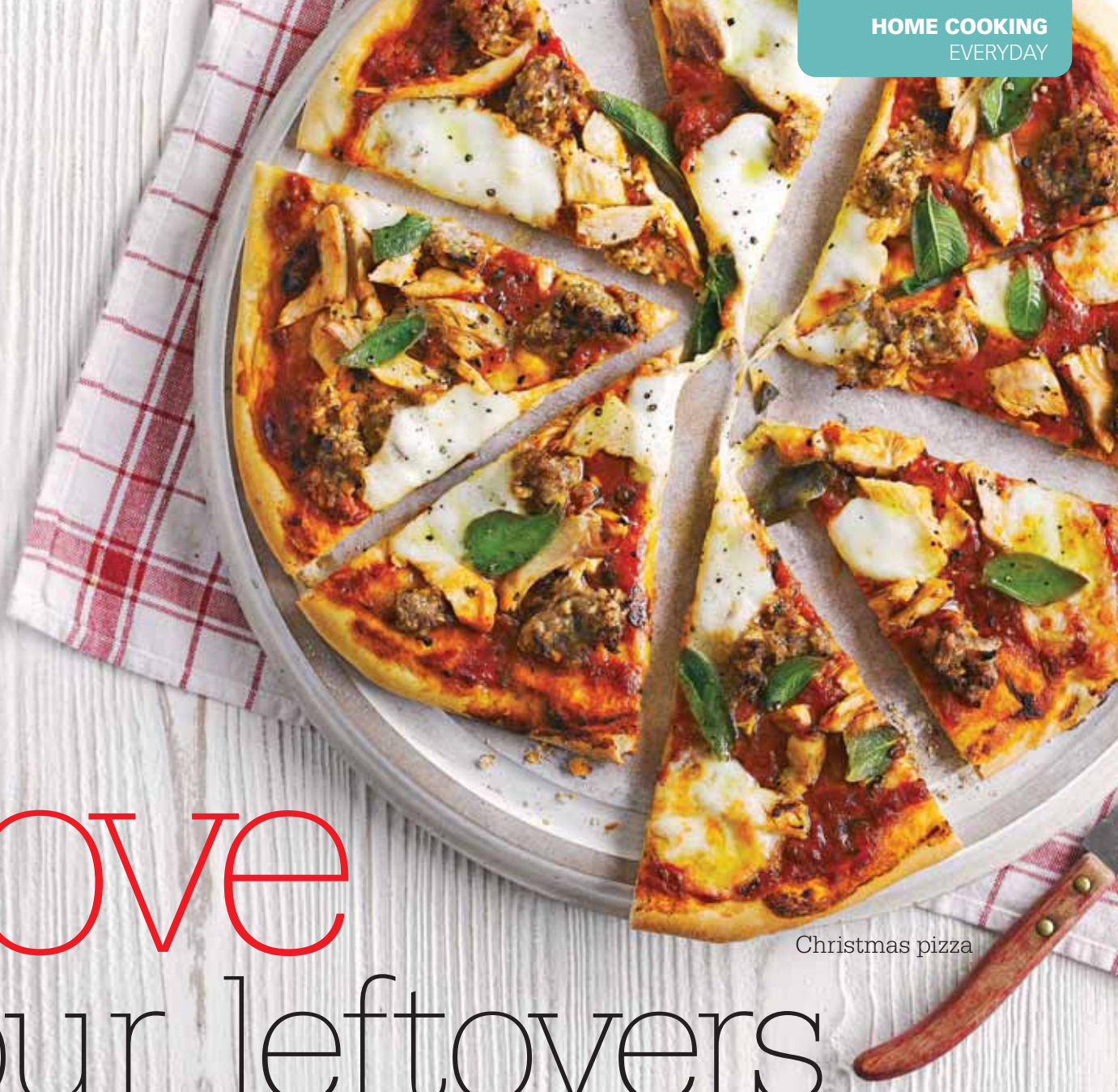
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Christmas pizza

Love your leftovers

Tasty suppers to make sure none of your festive food goes to waste. Recipes KATY GREENWOOD Photographs SAM STOWELL

Christmas pizza

SERVES 2 ● PREP 15 MINS ● COOK 10-12 MINS Easy P

Heat oven to 220C/200C fan. Prepare **145g pizza base mix** following pack instructions. Once rolled out, leave to rest for 10 mins, then top with **6 tbsp tomato pasta sauce**.

Scatter over a **large handful (100g) of leftover stuffing** (a sausage stuffing works well) and about **100g of leftover cooked turkey**, then top with **100g of sliced mozzarella**. Toss **a little bit of picked sage leaves** with **1 tbsp olive oil**, then scatter over the pizza, drizzling over any remaining oil. Bake for 10-12 mins until the crust is crisp and the cheese has melted.

PER SERVING 624 kcals, protein 35g, carbs 48g, fat 32g, sat fat 12g, fibre 4g, sugar 5g, salt 2.1g

Turkey & mango noodle salad

SERVES 3-4 ● PREP 10 MINS ● NO COOK Easy Low cal Low fat 1 of 5-a-day Good for you

In a large bowl, stir together **375g cooked rice noodles**, **1 thinly sliced red onion**, **½ a peeled and sliced mango**, **300g shredded leftover turkey** and a large pack **coriander leaves**.

Mix **2 tbsp sweet chilli sauce** (or gluten-free alternative) with the **juice** and **zest 1 lime** and **1 tbsp sesame oil**. Toss the salad in the dressing, season and serve.

PER SERVING (3) 407 kcals, protein 31g, carbs 44g, fat 11g, sat fat 3g, fibre 3g, sugar 13g, salt 0.7g »

Food styling LIZZIE HARRIS | Styling SUE ROWLANDS

Smoked salmon & watercress hash

SERVES 2 ● PREP 5 MINS ● COOK 10 MINS Easy Omega-3 1 of 5-a-day

Heat **1 tbsp olive oil** and **a knob of butter** in a frying pan. Cook **1 chopped onion** over a medium heat for 5 mins until golden and softened. Stir in **2 handfuls chopped leftover roast** or **boiled potatoes** and cook, crushing slightly, for another few mins until the potatoes start to crisp.

Stir in **1-2 tsp horseradish sauce**, a **handful chopped watercress** and a **handful shredded smoked salmon**. Heat through for 1-2 mins. Meanwhile, **poach** or **fry 2 eggs**. Serve the hash topped with the eggs.

PER SERVING 397 kcals, protein 23g, carbs 30g, fat 20g, sat fat 5g, fibre 3g, sugar 5g, salt 2.7g

Turkey mac 'n' cheese

SERVES 4 ● PREP 10 MINS ● COOK 30 MINS Easy Calcium

Heat oven to 200C/180C fan. Cook **350g macaroni** or **penne** following pack instructions. Stir together **300ml half-fat crème fraîche**, **250g grated cheese** and a **large handful of leftover turkey** in a large baking dish. Drain the pasta and add to the dish, stirring everything together well and seasoning to taste.

Top with **50g breadcrumbs** and **a large handful of chopped unsalted nuts**. Bake for 15-20 mins until piping hot and the top is crisp and golden.

PER SERVING 765 kcals, protein 42g, carbs 58g, fat 41g, sat fat 22g, fibre none, sugar 4g, salt 1.5g

Leftovers salad with couscous & squash

SERVES 4 ● PREP 10 MINS ● COOK 30 MINS Easy Low cal 2 of 5-a-day Good for you

Heat oven to 200C/180C fan. Peel and chop **600g butternut squash** and cut **1 red onion** into wedges. Toss both with **2 tbsp oil**, season and roast for 25-30 mins. Meanwhile, prepare **200g couscous** following pack instructions and stir in **1 tbsp harissa**.

Add the **couscous to the squash** with **a handful of leftover dried fruit**, a couple of **handfuls of roughly chopped leftover mixed unsalted nuts** and **a large handful of chopped leftover turkey** (about 150-200g). Season and stir in a small pack chopped **mint** or **parsley**.

PER SERVING 427 kcals, protein 21g, carbs 52g, fat 14g, sat fat 2g, fibre 6g, sugar 13g, salt 0.3g

Turkey & potato curry

SERVES 4 ● PREP 5 MINS ● COOK 15 MINS Easy Low fat Vit C 2 of 5-a-day Good for you

Heat **1 tbsp sunflower oil** in a large pan over a fairly high heat. Cook **1 large thickly sliced onion** and **1 deseeded and chopped green pepper,** for 3-4 mins until starting to soften and brown slightly. Stir in **2 tbsp curry paste** and **2 garlic cloves, crushed,** then cook for another 1-2 mins. Add the **400g can chopped tomatoes** and **150ml water**. Bring to the boil and bubble for 5 mins. Turn the heat down, stir in **300g leftover diced turkey,** and **300g diced leftover potatoes (boiled or roasted),** and cook for another 2-3 mins, then season and add **2 tbsp mango chutney**. Scatter with **chopped coriander** and serve with **rice or naan**.

PER SERVING 294 kcals, protein 26g, carbs 26g, fat 10g, sat fat 2g, fibre 4g, sugar 11g, salt 0.8g GF



Turkey & potato curry – deliciously low in fat

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JN/1975

Chef skills

Learn to:

Prepare lobster



Working with this delicious crustacean can be tricky, especially if you want to keep the shape of the meat intact. Here Simon Barber, executive chef of Abu Dhabi Golf Club and Saadiyat Beach Golf Club shows us how to cut and prep a lobster, and shares a healthy Asian-inspired way to eat it too. Photographs ANAS CHERUR



Simon Barber, executive chef of Abu Dhabi Golf Club and Saadiyat Beach Golf Club, has over 18 years of experience in restaurants, and has previously worked at Fanr restaurant at Manarat Al Saadiyat, La Mer at The Ritz Carlton Doha, Noga Hilton Cannes – where he cooked for the late Michael Jackson, and Sharon Stone, among others – and the Oxo Tower in London.

Lobster pomello salad

SERVES 4 ● PREP 15MINS
● COOK 12-16MINS Easy

1 green mango
150g pomelo, peeled
100g lettuce leaves
2 Maine lobsters, cooked and shelled
20 avocado slices
6 semi-dried or fresh cherry tomatoes, cut into half
8 tbsp coconut chilli dressing
1 tbsp peanuts, toasted
Coriander leaves, for garnish
5g peppercorns
4g bay leaves
10g star anise
30g lemon
25g lime
FOR THE COCONUT CHILLI DRESSING
2 tsp garlic cloves, chopped
2 tsp fresh ginger, cooked
4 tbsp fish sauce
160ml lime juice
1 tbsp white sugar
1 tbsp peanut oil
2 tbsp red chillis, chopped
120ml coconut cream

1 Slice the green mango thinly and julienne.
2 Mix all the dressing ingredients together, except the coconut cream. Allow the dressing to sit for 1hr, then whisk in the coconut cream. Refrigerate until required.
3 Toss the green mango and pomelo together. Add 2tbsp of the dressing and arrange on a plate with lettuce leaves.
4 Bring a pan of water to the boil with the peppercorns, bay leaves, anise, lemon and lime (together known as a mirepoix), add the lobster and gently simmer for 8 mins. Remove the lobster and plunge into ice cold water. Once cold, remove the lobsters and dry thoroughly on kitchen paper or a tea towel.
5 Slice the lobster and arrange on the plate with the avocados and tomatoes. Sprinkle the peanuts all over the salad and drizzle the dressing all over. Garnish with coriander leaves before serving.

Text and coordination NICOLA MONTEATH



Separate the claws from the lobster tail by breaking with your hands.



Tie the tail up with a piece of string – this helps keep it straight and makes it easier to slice once cooked.



Place all the lobster parts in a pot of boiling water with the mirepoix.



Remove the string from the tail with a knife.



Squeeze the tail with your hands until the shell cracks. Then using your thumb, open the tail and take out the meat from it.



Prepare the arms by holding onto the claw with one hand. The arm should face you vertically. Using a sharp knife, cut down along the edge of the arm and pull out the meat.



Hold the moveable part of the claw and move it back and forth gently, to loosen it. Carefully snap it off to one side, removing the two pieces of cartilage.



Using a knife, repeatedly hit the side of the claw shell half way down to the base to make a small hole. Turn the claw on its side and give it a quick whack with the back of the knife.



The shell should split open from where you made the hole, releasing the bottom half of the shell to take out the meat. Wash the all lobster meat thoroughly and dry on paper towels. GF



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Sugar & spice

Making our cute gingerbread cottage is a lovely project for the family over the holidays.

Recipe SARAH COOK Photograph DAVID MUNNS

Food styling SARAH COOK | Styling JENNY IGGLEDEN

Homemade gingerbread cottage

MAKES 1 ● PREP 45 MINS ● COOK 30-40 MINS A little effort ❄ UNCOOKED DOUGH OR BAKED BISCUITS (BEFORE ASSEMBLING)

It's a good idea to make a gingerbread cottage over two days, baking the dough and beginning to assemble it. Leave everything to dry overnight, so it's really firm before you start building and decorating.

1kg plain flour, plus a little extra for dusting
300g cold butter, diced
2 tbsp mixed spice
2 tbsp ground ginger
1 tbsp bicarbonate of soda
450g light soft brown sugar
3 large eggs
225g golden syrup
TO ASSEMBLE & DECORATE
750g icing sugar
400g preserving or pearl sugar
2 egg whites
200g ready-to-roll fondant icing, plus a few ping-pong-sized balls, wrapped in cling film, ready for assembling

MAKE THE DOUGH

1 Put about half the flour in a food processor with the butter. Whizz until you can't see any lumps of butter remaining (if you don't have a food processor, rub the butter into *all* of the flour with your fingertips, until it resembles fine crumbs). Tip the buttery flour into your largest mixing bowl and mix in the remaining flour, spices and bicarbonate of soda with a pinch of salt. Stir in the sugar.

2 Whisk the eggs with the golden syrup and stir into the flour mixture with a wooden spoon. Using your hands, knead together into a smooth dough. *Use straight away, or chill or freeze until ready to bake.*

CUT OUT ALL THE SHAPES

3 Heat oven to 200C/180C fan. Roll out a quarter of the dough at a time on a sheet of baking parchment, to the thickness of 2 x £1 coins. Use a small, sharp knife to cut around the cottage templates (see next page) – remember that each time you'll need 2 x ROOF, 2 x END and 2 x SIDE for one cottage. Remove the trimmings and lift the gingerbread, on its parchment, onto baking trays. Re-roll trimmings to cut out all the shapes you need.

BAKE YOUR GINGERBREAD

4 Bake the gingerbread one tray at a time (so it cooks evenly), on a high shelf in the oven for 8-12 mins, until rich brown and firm to the touch. Give each tray 3-5 mins to cool, then carefully sit the templates back onto the relevant shapes and trim any edges to neaten **(A)**. Keep these trimmings for nibbles. Use a small knife, or heart-shaped cutters, to cut out any doors and windows you want to have. If you want to fill your cottage with lights, use the end of one of the SIDE templates to cut out a little door in the back END of the cottage.

5 For a roof like ours, roll out remaining gingerbread to about half the thickness of the walls. Use a 3-4cm cutter to stamp out rounds – to fully cover the roofs, you will need about 75 round biscuit tiles. Bake as above, but for 6-9 mins – as they are thinner, they will bake quicker. Let all the biscuits cool completely.

DECORATE YOUR GINGERBREAD

6 Sift 250g of the icing sugar into a bowl, dribble in water, stirring until you have a thick-ish icing. Tip the preserving sugar or pearl sugar into a shallow bowl and get a couple of cooling racks ready. Dip the round roof tile biscuits into the icing, one by one – covering about a quarter of the biscuit in icing **(B)**. It looks nice if they're all a bit higgledy-piggledy. Dip into the preserving sugar to stick, then sit on the cooling racks and leave to dry.

7 Put the egg whites in a large bowl, sift in the remaining 500g of icing sugar, then stir to make a thick, smooth icing. Spoon a little into a piping bag with a very small nozzle. Spoon half of the rest into a piping bag that has a slightly larger nozzle (or spoon into large food bags and, when ready to ice, snip off the corner to turn into a piping bag). Keep the rest covered in the bowl. Use the small piping bag to pipe any icing decorations you want onto the END that is going to be the front of your cottage. Leave to dry.

START BUILDING

8 Arrange the wall biscuits as you are going to assemble them. Swap to the big bag of icing with a medium nozzle to pipe generous snakes of icing along the SIDE edges **(C)** and stick the walls together. Pipe extra icing where the walls join each other on the inside of the cottage, and support the sides using your icing balls **(D)**.

9 To decorate the roof, scrape any excess icing and sugar from the underside of the roof tiles with a small knife, so they can lie flat. Start at the bottom of one and work along in a row, using the icing in the bowl, spreading good-sized blobs of icing on the underside of the top of each tile biscuit to stick **(E)**. Let the bottom row overhang the edge of the ROOF. Continue working up, sticking a row at a time, sitting the row above in the gaps of the row below, so the tiles sit in a diamond pattern rather than straight lines down the ROOF **(F)**. You'll need to cut some of the tiles on the edges to fit – just use a big sharp knife and be brave (you should have a few spares available in case you have any accidents). Repeat to cover the second ROOF, then leave the completed ROOFS with the half-built cottage for a few hrs at least, or preferably overnight, until set.

10 When ready, remove the supports from the cottage and stick on the ROOFS **(see step 8 and G)**. This bit can be fiddly, so you may need an extra pair of hands. Shape your icing balls to support the bottoms of the ROOFS. Hold the biscuits on firmly for a few mins until the icing starts to set **(H&I)**. Set again for a few hrs, or overnight.

FINISHING TOUCHES

11 To finish decorating like ours, roll marble-sized balls of the ready-to-roll icing and stick them along the ROOF top – this is perfect for hiding the join. To make the icicles, start with the nozzle at a 90-degree angle to the ROOF and squeeze out a pea-sized blob of icing. Keeping the pressure on, pull the nozzle down and then off – the icing will pull away, leaving a pointy trail. Repeat all around the front of the cottage, covering the gap between the ROOF and roof tiles too, if you like.

• To eat or not to eat...

Your gingerbread cottage and sweet snow (see below) will be edible for about a week, but will last a lot longer as a display.

LET THERE BE LIGHT!

Push a few LED battery tea candle lights (available from Amazon) or some fairy lights through the back door – you can use the gingerbread piece you cut away to block the hole, so that all the light stays inside.

Be careful if you use fairy lights, however, these emit heat – so don't leave them on for too long.



















CREATE A WINTER WONDERLAND Crush up lots of **mint imperials** by putting them in a large sandwich bag and bashing with a heavy rolling pin. Then mix with equal quantities of **desiccated coconut** and **icing sugar** – you can even add a pinch of **edible glitter**, if you like, for a magical sparkle. Set on a board or a plate and spread this mixture around the cottage to create a snowy scene. >>

Gingerbread cottage template



MAKING YOUR TEMPLATES

Use tracing paper or baking parchment to copy our three templates, then stick onto card and cut out neatly.

ROOF

END



SIDE

LEFTOVER DOUGH?

Re-roll, stamp into gingerbread men, and bake as described in step 4. GF

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Make your own macarons

Why not surprise friends with a D-I-Y foodie gift this festive season? Alannah Doe, Specialty sous chef pastry at The Address Dubai Marina, shows us how to make delectable macarons filled with raspberry cream. Photographs ANAS CHERUR



Text NICOLA MONTEATH



Alannah Doe is the Specialty sous chef pastry at The Address Dubai Marina, and has previously worked at The Savoy Hotel, London, and the Landmark London. She has won a number of accolades including winning Dessert of the year 2012 award from the Association of Pastry Chefs, London.

Vanilla macarons with raspberry cremeux

MAKES 12 ● PREP 30 MINS ● COOK 16 MINS A little effort

300g sugar
80ml water
110g egg white
1 vanilla pod
1 tsp white or any other food colouring
300g icing sugar
300g almond powder
FOR THE RASPBERRY CREMEUX
240g raspberry purée (Available at all leading supermarkets)
65g sugar
275g whole egg, whisked
200g white chocolate, melted

1 Boil the sugar and water to 121C, using a thermometer to check it is correct.
2 In an electric mixer, mix the egg whites until soft peaks are formed. Then add the sugar gradually, ensuring it does not go above 121C.
3 Once the bottom of the bowl feels cold, add the vanilla beans from the pod, and food colouring and mix thoroughly.
4 Sieve the icing sugar and almonds, then add to the egg white and vanilla to form a paste. Fold in one third roughly to incorporate, then carefully fold in the two remaining thirds, ensuring you scrape down the side of the bowl and mix thoroughly.
5 Place in a piping bag with a small piping nozzle and pipe the desired shape or size on a nonstick baking mat or tray.
6 Bake at 160C for 16 mins for medium-sized macarons and 8 mins for mini macarons, turning half way through. Set aside to cool. Store the shells in the freezer if not being used, or top a shell with the raspberry cremeux and place another shell on top.
7 To make the raspberry cremeux, boil the raspberry purée and sugar. Pour this over the whisked whole eggs and place back in the pan to thicken while continually stirring. Once thickened, strain. Place the white chocolate in a bowl and add the strained mixture on top, using a spatula combine the two together. Transfer to a plastic container with cling wrap covering the surface. Once chilled and hardened, take a small amount and fill between two macaron shells.
The macarons keep for two months in the freezer. GF



The egg whites and sugar should form soft peaks. Push down all the sugar crystals from the side of the bowl into the mixture.



Carefully fold the mixture together to make a thick paste.



Transfer the paste into a piping bag adding a little at a time.



Pipe the paste onto a baking tray. You can decide how large or small you want your macarons to be.

TIP To make sure your macarons are all the same size, dip a cookie cutter in the almond mix, then place on the baking paper - this will form an outline that you can use when piping each one on.

The London Dairy dessert series

#12 Delightfully chocolate-y



Sangit Gupta, executive pastry chef at Le Meridien Al Aqah Beach Resort, creates an innovative baked meringue shell, to serve a quenelle of London Dairy's Chocolate Brownie Delight ice cream in.

Baked vanilla meringue with pistachio swirl

SERVES 4 | PREP 15 MINS | COOK 8 HRS, 30 MINS

½ vanilla bean pod
50g sugar
100g egg white
4 raspberries, cherries, physalis and pistachios, each
FOR THE PISTACHIO SWIRL
100g blanched pistachios, ground into fine pieces
50g condensed milk

1 Scrape the vanilla beans out of the pod and mix well with the sugar.
2 Beat the egg whites on low speed in a mixer. Once it becomes slightly fluffy, add the sugar in gradually. Mix until it reaches a soft peak stage. Place the mixture into a piping bag.
3 Foil small dip bowls and place them on a baking tray lined with butter paper. Pipe the meringue mix on top of the foiled bowl to form a dome with small peaks (as shown here).
4 Bake in the oven at 65C for 8 hrs. Once baked, set aside to cool.
5 Mix the pistachios with the condensed milk. Pass through a sieve.
6 Using a pastry brush, create a line of the milk swirl on the edge of the plate. Then place the berries and pistachios on the swirl. Place one meringue shell in the middle of the plate, make a quenelle of the ice cream inside the shell, then place the other shell on the side at an angle to finish.

MEET THE CHEF



Nepalese executive pastry chef at Le Meridien Al Aqah Beach Resort, Sangit Gupta, has been with the Starwood Group for over eight years, having worked with W Hotel Retreat and Spa in Maldives before taking up his position here seven months ago. The chef, who got his culinary training in Hotel Management at Bangalore University, uses his experience to make creatively styled pastries and chocolates in his position as executive pastry chef.

CHEF'S TIP:

"Use chilled eggs instead of eggs at room temperature, as it will be easier to separate the egg white from the yolk."



To see a step-by-step video for this recipe, visit youtube.com/bbcgoodfoodme or facebook.com/LondonDairy, or you could simply scan the QR code with your smartphone.

Two other ways to enjoy London Dairy's Chocolate Brownie Delight ice cream:

1



Serve a quenelle with waffles, strawberries and whipped cream. Add gold dust for a gourmet touch.

2



Layer the ice cream in between cookies to make an ice cream sandwich. Top with whipped cream and raspberries.

LONDON DAIRY

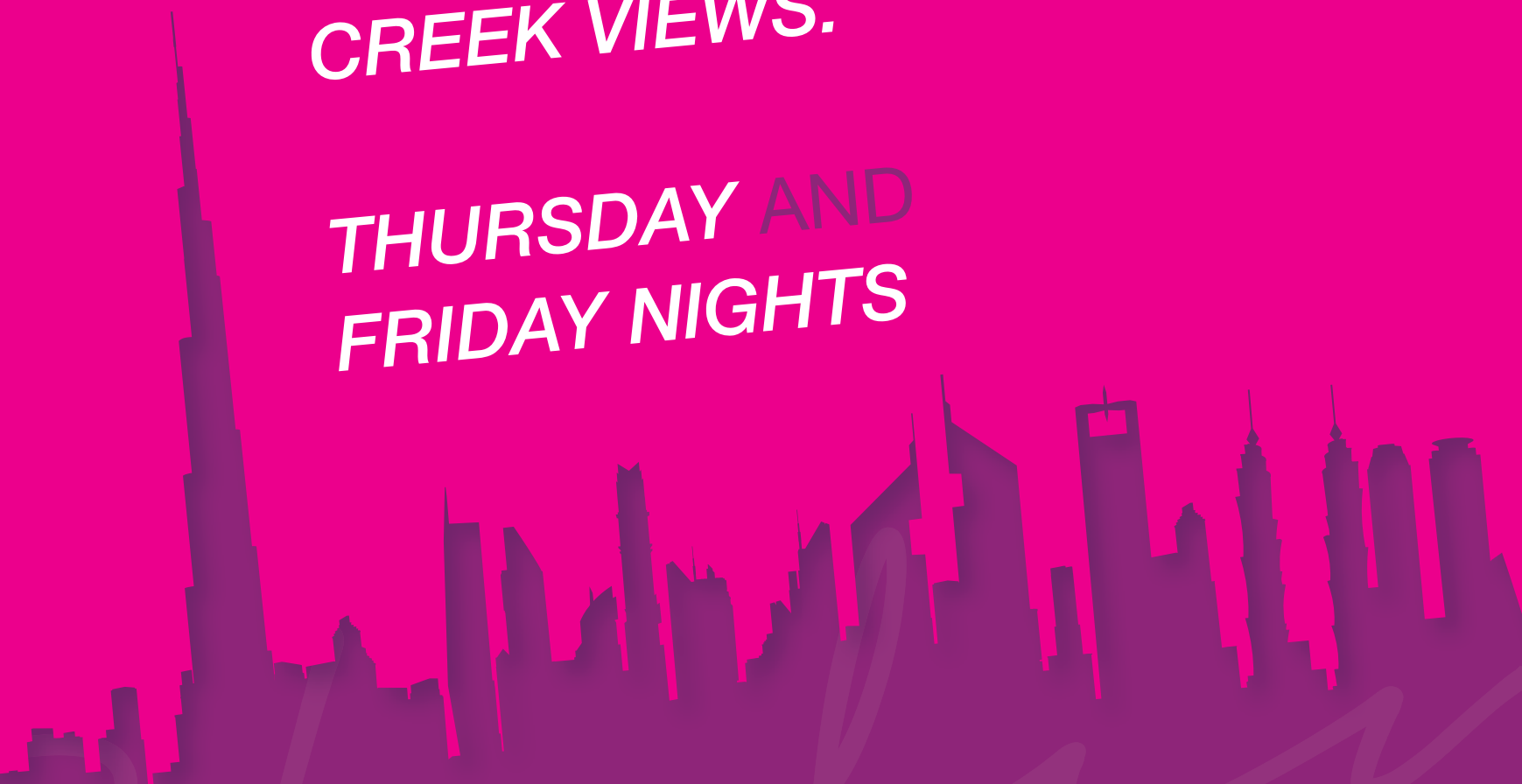
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IN THIS SECTION

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✶ Inside baking goddess Jo Wheatley's home kitchen, **P102** ✶ Plan a winter break in Prague, **P110**



Food was the star of the show at DWHC



UAE women displayed their homemade goodies



The heritage village showcased traditional Emirati culture

The world at our doorstep

The Dubai World Trade Centre played host to the first ever Dubai World Hospitality Championships, a three-day gastronomic extravaganza, last month.

The inaugural Dubai World Hospitality Championship held last month was a one-of-its kind event that not only showcased Emirati traditions and culinary heritage for the first time on a platform of this level, but also brought top chefs from around the world to participate in cooking competitions.

The three-day event, which ran from November 16-18, was organised by Za'abeel Palace Hospitality under the directive of His Highness Sheikh Hamdan Bin Mohammed Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai. His Highness Ahmed bin Hareb Al Falahi, President of DWHC, said, "No effort has being spared to make this inaugural event a truly memorable one."

International guests at the event were in agreement, with Chef Charles Caroll, the Congress Committee Chairman of WorldChefs saying, "Most countries take years to develop such a display, and the DWHC has managed to do it in a matter of weeks! This is possible only because of the presence of talented chefs, and the unconditional support from the government and the organising team."

The judging panel, made up of international experts, adjudged Singapore as the winner of the Golden Award in the International competition, while US won the silver award and Australia, the bronze. In the Emirati competition, which saw amateur chefs from across the emirates battle it out, hosts Dubai walked away with gold, with Sharjah in second place, and Ajman taking home the bronze award. All participants in the Emirati competition received cash prizes however.

It wasn't all just competitions, as, in an effort to highlight Emirati culinary traditions, the World Trade Centre venue was transformed into a lovely heritage village area, complete with local women cooking up traditional foods, fishing memorabilia, display of historical artefacts and so on. The local culture was also showcased through stalls of Homemade and Innovative products, where UAE national ladies exhibited wares ranging from homemade sweets, pickles, and spices, to jewellery and henna design. Celebrity chef cooking demos completed the mix.

After three days of cooking, feasting, and mingling, the event closed with a gala dinner that hinted at bigger and better things to come in the next edition, which is set to be held in January 2015 at Meydan. HE Ahmed bin Hareb Al Falahi, President of DWHC concluded the proceedings at a gala dinner saying, "Our intention was primarily to showcase Emirati cuisine on a global platform. We are humbled by the fabulous participation and reception that the first edition has received."

DWHC FAST FACTS

12 The number of participating countries in international competitions: Germany, Brazil, Russia, Canada, Wales, Hong Kong, South Africa, Slovenia, Australia, USA, Singapore, UAE.

7 The number of members in the Dream Team, a unique group of professionals put together by WorldChefs who were doing live cooking performances at the event.

700 The number of chefs in the Hospitality Sector competitions.

6 million The total amount of prize money in dirhams, given away at the event.

WHAT THEY SAID



Chef Uwe Micheel, President of Emirates Culinary Guild

"It thought this was an amazing event. The key thing was that it was the first time we had professionals and amateurs chefs competing in the same event. The standard of food overall was very high. I'm also very proud of our team's performance. Since it was the first time we had a national team participating in an international competition, I told the winners, the Singapore guys – give us two years, then we challenge you!

A personal highlight for me was that we got to learn so much about Emirati food and culture from the local housewives. We saw a lot of local dishes we don't get to see everyday. In fact, we are opening a new Emirati restaurant in March next year at Radisson Blu Dubai Deira Creek. Now that the royal household has put its back behind promoting the local cuisine, I'm looking forward to the next one, and what the future brings."

"I have learned new way cooking, and Imy most delightful experience was indulging my senses of taste to the local cookery."

- Stephen Botlero, participating chef

"I loved the show - the hospitality was superb and it was a pleasure for me to meet the top chefs in the world."

- Sandra, visitor



His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum attended the event



Proud winners being handed their medals



DWHC was held under the directive of His Highness Sheikh Hamdan Bin Mohammed Al Maktoum, seen here with His Highness Ahmed bin Hareb Al Falahi, President of DWHC



Celebrity chef Suzanne Husseini showcased contemporary Emriati dishes



UAE women helped bring the local cuisine to the forefront



Chef Tarik Ibrahim was just one of many celebrity chefs who did demos



International chefs plan their strategy



Emirati traditions were proudly displayed to international guests



HOW TO BE THE PERFECT party host

To help you plan this year's festive gathering to perfection, and make it a glamorous affair, Nicola Monteath got the experts to share their top tips.

A grand entrance

Get the festive mood going right from the outset. "Use solar lights to brighten the walk way and entrance to the garden, or fairy lights on your main door. This allows you to share the festive cheer with everyone passing by," says Saadi Khawaja, Regional Visual Merchandising Manager at Ace.

Impressive invites

First impression are made with the invitations! "Send out the invites at least four weeks prior to your holiday party and choose a date when most people will be free," says Sarah Feyling, Managing Director of Couture Events. Invites can be hand-made, sent as a message in a glass bottle with a piece of twine wrapped around, or if you haven't got the time or money for that, simply via email. But make sure you add a personal touch to it by giving it a creative design – numerous software options offer user-friendly ways to get graphic.

CENTREPIECES WITH A TWIST

While flowers are pretty, they tend to be overused. "Use seasonal fruit, a tureen or make a homemade wreath of citrus fruits," says George Arnold Foster-Vincent, in-house designer at home store Ethan Allen. These are not only unique centerpieces, but also make a dinner table look more vibrant.

ENTICING AROMAS

"Food is an integral part of the festive celebration, which is why it's important to greet your guests with aromas of the food," says Saadi. Make sure you use unscented candles in white or ivory shades at the table and in the living room. Feel free to use seasonal, scented candles in other areas of your home.



Text by NICOLA MONTEATH | Photographs SUPPLIED, COURTESY OF IKEA, INDIGO LIVING AND ETHAN ALLEN



LIGHT IT UP!

Lighting is key to creating an alluring party mood. Ditch overhead lights on this occasion and use lanterns, lamps or dimmers to transform the room into a festive wonderland. "If your budget permits, hire the professionals to create an ice blue tone for that winter wonderland feel," says Sarah. You could also group a selection of candles of different shapes and sizes together in clusters to create a cosy, vintage-style effect while illuminating a space. If using stick candles, place them in the freezer a few days prior, to prevent them from dripping wax all over your furniture.

SWEET MEMENTOS



Party favours are a lovely way of putting a smile on guest's faces as they depart – who doesn't like leaving with a little something? If you have time on your hands, and prefer giving gifts that have a personal touch, make a batch of truffles, cookies, or salted caramel and pack into small mason jars. Alternatively, you can follow Sarah's recommendation for a party gift and give a holiday survival kit filled with a chocolate bar, bottle of grape juice, small pack of bath bombs, scented votive candle, eye mask and a hot chocolate mix.

GET A HEADSTART

Marta Yanci, owner of boutique catering company Marta's Kitchen, suggests taking the stress out of cooking by preparing make-ahead dishes. "Plan your menu in advance so that you can purchase ingredients three days prior to the event. You can then create a schedule with what you will cook each day, so you don't leave everything to the last minute," she says.





MAKE YOUR OWN FESTIVE WREATH

Nothing says festive as much as hanging a wreath on your front door does! You could also place the wreath as a centrepiece on your dinner or coffee table with candles in the centre. Here Michael Lenon, Director at Bliss Flowers and Design, shows us how to make a D-I-Y a wreath at home.

WHAT YOU NEED:

- **Soft-touch wire ring, to use as a frame**
- **Greens such as buxus sempervirens (dark-green boxwood, small leaves), Chamaecyparis pisifera 'Boulevard' Sawara False Cypress (soft, feathery, blue foliage), Ilex verticillata 'Winter Gold' Winterberry Holly (orangey-gold fruit) or Microbiota decussate Russian Arborvitae (purplish hued foliage). These are available at flower boutiques but you can also use artificial leaves available at most home stores.**

1 Keep the wire ring on a table, and carefully place a green branch around it (Make sure all the green branches are of the same size).

2 Secure the branch with a pin by piercing the pin from one side of the green branch to the other side. Make sure the pins are placed carefully on the side of the branch which will be facing the wall or table.

3 Pinch the pins along the side of the greens to secure, ensuring they are wrapped tightly around the greens so they do not fall out. Continue with the rest of the branches, with each successive branch covering the cut ends of the previous branch.

4 Once the wire ring is covered with the green branches, wrap a ribbon all over or tie one on top if you like. You could also secure pieces of holly on top with pins.

Note: If using fresh greens, keep your wreath out of direct sunlight and mist regularly with water; it will keep for about two-three weeks. >>



MAKE IT PERSONAL

Place cards add a personal touch, so make sure to use them on your dinner table. If you want to go the extra mile, you could also ask guests to send in their favourite Christmas memory and leave a gift or memento linked to it on their plates – it's a brilliant conversation starter.

DECK THE HALLS!

"Choose one theme and style," says George. It makes shopping for décor easier, and gives your space a more professionally designed look at the same time. Base the colours on your home interior style and colour. It is a good idea to choose a key colour theme that flows from the tree ornaments, to the flowers, table runners, crockery and napkins. Colours such as green and red are great for a traditional feel, while silver and blue are perfect for a white Christmas theme. White is always useful to include in the colour scheme, as it breaks the monotony and adds a classic touch, so use it on the dinner table with your chosen colours.



Help yourself

If help is not an option and you feel you might find yourself busy when guests arrive, make a hot chocolate, cocktail or mulled wine station near the entrance, so that guests can help themselves as and when they like. This could also end up being a great mingling spot for guests. Or, you could place a chocolate fountain, puddings and a selection of pies at the station post-dinner.

TUNE-TASTIC

The classic Christmas songs are par for course at every Christmas party, but not everyone is a fan! Sarah recommends playing jazz or remixed versions of the classics, while Saadi suggests asking everyone to send in a list of their favourite tunes when confirming their attendance.



FESTIVE SCENTS

George suggests simmering a stovetop potpourri mix of one whole orange or orange peel, ½ cup of cranberries, 1 tbsp whole clove, 3 cinnamon sticks (or a handful of small pieces of cinnamon), a bit of grated nutmeg and 3 pieces of star anise with water or apple cider juice, to let the seasonal aromas waft in the air around the house and create a festive ambience.

A HELPING HAND

It's important to stay out of the kitchen, have fun and mingle with the guests at your party. "Hire bar staff to make cocktails and serve drinks, and a butler to serve dishes on the dinner table and cater to guests needs. This makes the party less stressful and will keep you from running around and panicking," says Rachna Chadha, CEO and Partner of BAQAA-FNP Glamour Weddings and Events.

THE FIVE-STAR TOUCH

"Small touches go a long way," says Sarah. Place mints and chewing gums in a bowl in the living room, perfume, hair spray and travel sets of toothpaste and toothbrushes in the washroom, and anything else you think your guests will require. These will leave long-lasting impressions. GF



THE GREAT OUTDOORS

Planning to take the party outdoors for a digestif or cup of hot chocolate post-dinner? Make sure to continue the festive theme outside as well. "A fire pit is a wonderful feature and certainly evokes the feeling of cooler climes. The outdoors is also somewhere where your smokers will most likely gather, so ensure you continue the festive atmosphere and décor to this area also," says Sarah. Make sure the garden or balcony is clean and tidy (with your odds and ends neatly stashed away out of sight), and light it up with candles and/or fairy lights.



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Your essential party survival guide

Expert tips for eating healthy and staying well during the season of indulgences. By Nicola Monteath.

The festive season can be an exciting, but tricky time for most of us – who can resist another one of the seasonal gingerbread cookie, pie or canapé? To ensure you survive the party season without putting on one too many pounds, follow our list of dos (Be nice) and don'ts (Don't be naughty) from nutrition experts Alison Ramsay, Nutritionist at Smart Fitness training centre, and Stephanie Pech, Nutrition and Metabolic Balance Coach at Metabolic Balance nutrition programme.

BE NICE

DO EAT BEFORE THE PARTY

It might sound strange to some, but if you head to a party or event on an empty stomach, you are most likely going to snack on canapés – most of which are high in fat. Try to eat a small nutritious snack such as fruits, a handful of nuts or crudités with a low-fat dip before heading out.

DO CHOOSE WISELY

Avoid chips with dips, sausage rolls, mince pies and deep fried foods. Instead, look for unsalted nuts, olives, pretzels (watch the portion size) and vegetables with low-fat dips – so you can still eat, without being a party pooper.

DO EAT TURKEY AND OILY FISH

A whole roast turkey is the best part of the festive season! If you're heading to a sit-down dinner, or even at the buffet, choose this healthy lean meat instead of beef or duck – go easy on the trimmings and gravy though. Oily fish such as salmon is also a good choice, compared to other fish that are not as high in nutritive value.

DO HIT THE GYM

It can be hard to resist cheating on your diet at this time of the year, with the invites pouring in. If you do, try to make up for it with an extra session at the gym. Getting a gym buddy along might also motivate you, especially if the two of you are heading to the same gatherings and bingeing over the festive season together.

DO KEEP A FOOD JOURNAL

By writing down everything that you eat or drink during the party season, you will be able to monitor all your dietary habits consistently, and manage your weight at the same time as well.

DON'T BE NAUGHTY

DON'T TUCK INTO THE BREAD BASKET

At the start of your meal, try to avoid bread at all costs, and save room for healthier options such as salads, soups and oysters.

DON'T CHOOSE A BIG PLATE

The bigger the plate, the more food you are likely to pile up on it. So choose a small plate and help yourself to smaller portions. When you are done with the first plate, wait for 15 to 30 mins to let the body register what you ate and digest properly. Only decide if you want to help yourself to seconds after those 30 minutes.

DON'T GO FOR BEIGE

Try not to pick pastries, fried Asian snacks and crisps, as beige-coloured foods such as these are high in fat and low in nutrients. Look at it this way – if you know the dish will make a white paper takeaway bag see through, avoid it.

DON'T DRINK TOO MUCH

You might think you're eating healthy by opting for salads or lean meats, but you could be unconsciously adding calories with your favourite cocktail or glass of wine. Alcoholic drinks are high in calories and will leave you feeling parched over the course of the night. Pair drinks with fresh natural juice instead of sodas, syrups, creamy liqueurs, fresh cream, egg yolk and coconut milk. Keep hydrated throughout by drinking a glass of water after every drink, and when you're drinking wine, add ice cubes so it gets slightly diluted and also stays cool for longer.

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'Little brown card' gift cards from **Bloomingdale's-Dubai**, worth **Dhs 7,500**

5 lucky winners can get their hands on a Dhs1,500 Bloomingdale's-Dubai 'little brown card' gift card each.

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Five lucky winners will win a 'Little brown card' gift card, worth Dhs1,500 each, to spend on goodies from the Home store which offers a unique selection of beautiful products from exquisite china from Lenox and sparkling glassware from Waterford, to scented candles and home fragrances. The gift card is valid for shopping at the Fashion store too.

Log on bbcgoodfoodme.com to enter this competition and simply answer this question:

In what city is the first international Bloomingdales store located?

Scan this QR code to go straight to our website.

*Terms & conditions apply. Employees of CPI Media Group are not eligible to enter. Winners will be selected on random basis from correct entries.

Speakeasy with Shannon

Celebrity chef and restaurateur Shannon Bennett freewheels about Australian cuisine, food history, and why the fundamental principle of real estate should apply to restaurants too, in a chat with Sudeshna Ghosh.



"French onion soup was invented in Melbourne," says Shannon Bennett. Who knew?! Clearly, Shannon did. And if anyone knows anything about Melbourne's food culture, it's him – not only is he one of the city's best known international chefs, but he is someone who is passionate about food history. It is a real passion for discovering what is at the heart of a cuisine – "When I go to a place with an amazing food culture, I love to learn about it," he says – combined with unstinting hard work, that has propelled him to the stature he enjoys today as one of the leading ambassadors of Australia gastronomy.

Owner and chef of award-winning restaurant Vue de monde, as well as spinoff restaurants Café Vue and Bistro Vue, Shannon has some awe-inspiring credentials under his belt, which include working with industry legends such as Albert Roux, Alain Ducasse and Marco Pierre White.

Working his way to the top

With his shock of unkempt long hair and easygoing demeanour, Shannon wouldn't look out of place on the stage at a rock concert, and in fact, it is the rock and roll lifestyle of being a chef that first attracted him to this business – when he spent a few years living with his rockstar turned chef uncle Tom, who owned pubs in England, as a 12-year-old boy. "I fell in love with the lifestyle. But that was a false façade, I only learnt later about the hard work, the hours put behind it," Shannon laughs.

The hard work didn't seem to faze him at all though. In fact, according to Shannon, "hard work and passion are the backbone of talent. If you find what you love to do, and always do your best, the rest will follow."

After school, where he studied home economics, Shannon signed up for an apprenticeship at one of his uncle's pubs, the Viceroy pub, when he was 15 – and there was no looking back for him. He worked with the likes of John Burton-Race, "the hardest kitchen to work in, in Europe at the time," according to Shannon, with Nigel Marriage as head chef, who has been known to physically beat chefs!

After this baptism by fire, working with Marco Pierre White was like a picnic. Well, not quite, Shannon describes the experience as "challenging but a lot easier". Determined to work with the best, Shannon next took the opportunity to learn baking and pastry from the Roux brothers, as well as perfected his French technique with the likes of Alain Ducasse. Having built up a strong

Photographs SUPPLIED

foundation and armed with this enviable experience, Shannon moved back to Melbourne in 2000, and opened his first restaurant Vue de monde, to bring the latest in European finesse to Australia.



History on a plate

While he has undoubtedly developed a strong identity for himself since – with a focus on "local ingredients, underpinned by French technique" – his culinary style is continuously evolving. "It took me a couple of years to get a grounding," Shannon confesses. "Earlier I was doing other people's food, but that has changed now."

At the moment, he is inspired by Victoria's gold rush in the 1800s, when Melbourne was the world's wealthiest city and was home to the world's first five star hotel. Going back to his opening statement about the French onion soup, Shannon says, "Melbourne's always had amazing food. But the city has grown up in terms of expectations when you dine out. It's taken time but people now realise that you can have a great dining experience even in a little hole in the wall place."

"Australia is very independent in its foodie culture," he continues. "Australian food is covered in many different layers, but we are starting to go back to our roots."

His mission is to bring back rare, long-lost ingredients, as he tries to rediscover vegetables grown in the 18th century that have disappeared, and re-learn what people ate back then. For example, goose egg on white carrots (which originated in India and Afghanistan over a 1,000 years ago), is the sort of dish that he would like to serve up, with the intention of giving guests an unforgettable experience. "Restaurants need to put a story on a plate," he says. "What we need to do is provide a meal that you can't get at home."

His brand of storytelling comes to life not just in his food, but his various other projects which include authoring books both based on recipes as well as foodie travel guides, and TV appearances.

Shannon likes to tell stories that have a basis in food history, and uncover the essence of a cuisine – which he has done in his bestselling books Shannon Bennetts's France, Paris and New York (Melbourne University Publishing) respectively, and the latest, 28 days in Provence (Random House). He is also a regular guest on the globally popular show Masterchef Australia, which is co-hosted by his former protégé George Calombaris. "George asked me to do it, so I agreed. I got into it not knowing its powers, but the response from my customers was positive, so I went back," he says.

He continues to pursue his passion with his current project 'Cooking around the world' with kitchen brand Miele, whom he is a brand ambassador for. This culinary series, which brought him to Dubai recently, sees him immersing himself in a city's culture, and create a meal that meld local ingredients and ideas with Australian food. The global journey, during which he has visited 22 cities in three months, will culminate in a cookbook due to be released this month. I cannot think of a more suitable project for this chef, who counts going to the National Library to find recipes as one of his favourite pastimes, and harbours an ambition to bring Australia's historic dishes in a chronological order, in his restaurants.

Location, location, location

His passion for produce not only underlines his food philosophy – 'less is more' – but seems to be the one shared characteristic between all great chefs. Even Ferran Adria, the God of molecular gastronomy, when he spent some time in Shannon's kitchen working on a book together, demanded local ingredients to work with. "His food is like a project. He was like a schoolteacher, demanding 'Bring me 20 ingredients that are local'. I went to a farmer's market, foraged for ingredients with an aboriginal lady… it was an incredible learning experience and something of a turning point for me," Shannon says.

It is local produce that gives any food a sense of identity, and that is something that Shannon feels strongly about. "This is the trend in food around the world, it's all location-based," he says. "In the US, you know if you're eating on the West Coast or the East Coast. Copenhagen, as well, for example – Scandinavian food is really coming into its own now."

And it was a search for a sense of location that took Shannon to restaurants like Zaroob and Ravi's on his recent trip, foregoing the more glamorous high-end restaurants for what he hoped would help him "get under the skin of the culture".

Shannon is no stranger to Dubai, having been involved with the opening of the first Jones the Grocer outlet, and hasn't taken long to get his finger on the pulse of the restaurant scene here. "There is lots of good stuff going on here, but most of it is replicating what is in the rest of the world," he accurately describes. "There is nothing original here."

Few people do originality better than Shannon, so when I ask him about the possibility of opening up a restaurant here, he shies away from answering. Where would he have the time though, with his four books over four years deal with Penguin – which will include a new Vue de Monde cookbook, and a book on London's food history - on the cards, the Miele culinary series, and his pet project, a kibbutz style hotel that he is planning to open on a farm, formerly owned by Adrian Zecha (he of the renowned Aman resorts fame), due to open in 2016. All this in between working in the restaurants a couple of times a week. "That's my saving grace," he reveals.

It is indeed a rich legacy he will be leaving behind. He sums it up aptly in a quote from his father that he likes to use as a life philosophy, something we can all learn from and apply in our lives. "Leave a book on the shelf when you go, no matter what you do. That will give someone a direction later on". Shannon's book will certainly be worth reading. »

SIGNATURE RECIPES



French Onion Soup with Beer

SERVES 4

50g duck fat
1 kg brown onions, peeled and thinly sliced
1 tsp garlic puree
50 ml white wine
1l mushroom stock
¼ bunch thyme
1 tbsp Sherry vinegar
Salt, pepper
1 beer (375 ml)
4 Squares of Puff Pastry approx. 5mm thick and 2cm diameter larger than serving bowls
2 egg yolk, lightly beaten for glazing
100g Gruyere cheese, grated

1 In a heavy based pan on a medium heat, melt the duck fat. Add the onions and garlic and cook till they caramelise. Deglaze with the white wine and reduce until the liquid has evaporated.
2 Add the stock and the thyme. Reduce the liquid by a third. Add the sherry vinegar and cook for 2 mins. Remove from the heat and check seasoning.
3 Place the soup into the bowls and leave to chill in the fridge.
4 When ready to serve, top each soup with a fifth of the beer.
5 Measure the puff pastry to fit over the bowls with an excess of at least 2cm. Place the puff pastry onto each dish and seal the edges firmly into the bowl. Brush the egg yolk over the pastry. Rest in the refrigerator at least 30 mins.
6 Pre heat the oven to 180ºC. Bake for 12 minutes. Once baked, sprinkle cheese over the soup and bake for a further 5 minutes. Serve immediately.



Pear Tart Tatin

SERVES 4

180g sugar
180g butter
2 vanilla bean, split in half lengthways
4 pears, peeled, halved, cored and studded with cloves
2 pieces of puff pastry, rolled to a circle slightly larger than the pan you will use to cook the tart
Fresh cream, for serving
FOR THE EIGHT SPICE POWDER
40g juniper
60g star anise
30g white peppercorns
35g cinnamon quills
35g cloves
2 pinch es of saffron
15g cardamom
55g pink salt

1 To make the spice mix, pre heat the oven to 190C. Toast all the spices for the eight spice powder, except for the salt, over medium heat. Cool and blend to a powder with pink salt.
2 Evenly spread the sugar over the base of 2 sauté pans. Cut butter into four squares per pan and place on sugar. Sprinkle with several pinches of eight spice and lay vanilla bean halves in a crisscross.
3 Place pears core side down and pointing inwards. Cover with the circle of puff pastry tucking firmly underneath the pear, then chill for 10 minutes in the refrigerator.
4 Score pastry in the centre and in the middle of each pear. Place over a medium heat on the stovetop until sugar and butter begin to caramelize. Baste the pastry with the caramel that has formed in the pan and bake at 190C for 10 mins. Baste the pastry again and bake for a further 10 minutes.
5 Remove from the oven and turn out onto a chopping board. Cut in half and serve with cream. GF

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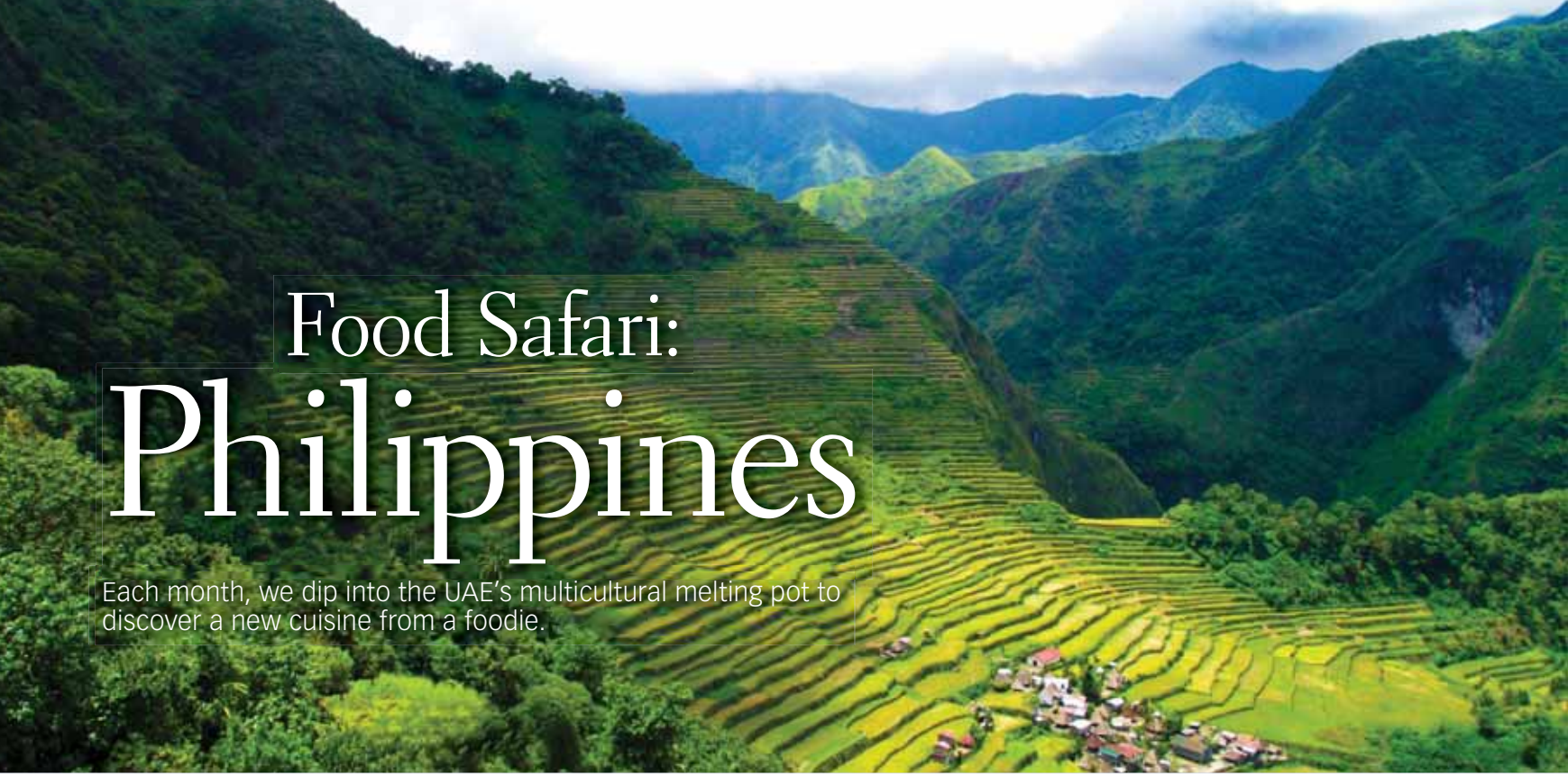
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Food Safari: Philippines

Each month, we dip into the UAE's multicultural melting pot to discover a new cuisine from a foodie.

When we arrived at Irene Marinas' home in Oud Metha, we were greeted with beautiful aromas of onions and garlic being sautéed on the stove by her mother. The kitchen was full, with Irene's father and mother helping her out, while her two little sons, Vincent and Matthew, waited for lunch to be served. "I try to cook traditional Filipino food for them when I can, to keep them in touch with their heritage," says Irene, who works as a personal assistant to the General Manager of Mövenpick Hotel and Apartments Bur Dubai.

With a passion for food, and like many other Filipino families, Irene loves cooking for her children, as it has been ingrained in her from the age of ten, when she assisted her mother and grandmother in the food kiosk operated from her home in Manila. Building on this passion for food, Irene also went on to study Hotel and restaurant management at Sta. Catalina College, making her quite the expert on the cuisine.

THE COUNTRY

The Republic of the Philippines, an archipelago of 7,000 picturesque islands, is a destination on most people's travel wish lists. The Southeast Asian island country sits in the western Pacific Ocean, with Taiwan to its north, Vietnam across the South China Sea to the west, and the Philippine Sea in the east. It is home to 120 ethnic groups that speak various dialects.

Manila, the capital and second largest city of Philippines is the commercial centre. "Our house in Lakandula Asuncion in Tondo, in the city of Metro Manila area, is centrally located," says Irene. "We are surrounded by everything – shops, markets, a church, and small kiosks selling authentic foods. Our family kiosk sold traditional Filipino-style chicken empanadas and spring rolls, made from fresh vegetables bought by my grandmother from the local market."

Irene tells us that fresh fruit and vegetables are available in abundance in Philippines as the island nation experiences a tropical climate. The landscapes in the higher regions of Philippines are filled with coconut palm trees, while sugar cane, corn and tropical fruits such as rambutan are produced in Central Luzon, a region in northern Philippines. Fresh fish and seafood, used heavily in Filipino cuisine, is made available due to the seas that surround the islands and deep sea fishing activities.

Rice is also grown in Philippines, in terraces in the Cordilleras area (Northern Luzon region) – now considered a UNESCO World Heritage Site – and is a staple of the diet. Proteins such as pork and beef are also an important part of the cuisine as well, purely because of the Spanish influence.

Philippines has seen many culinary influences over the centuries, both for its colonisation by the Spanish for over three hundred years, as well as its position on a busy trade route which allowed ingredients from China and Malaysia to come to the Philippines. The Spanish were a very important influence, having ruled over the Philippines islands from 1565 to 1898, and brought with them a variety of cooking styles, such as olive oil for sautéing, tomatoes and garlic, and dishes such as whole roasted pig (lechon) and paella – which the Filipinos make with fresh coconut milk and tomato sauce. Other delicacies of Spanish origin are the pan de sal; a sweet bread roll covered in fine breadcrumbs.

Initially Filipino cuisine was more Malay-Polynesian but gradually evolved to a more Asian flavour profile. "Many Chinese moved to the Philippines ages ago, and some got married to Filipinos. They brought with them noodles and taught their wives how to cook it with local condiments. Because of this we now have Filipino-Chinese food," says Irene. Some of these Chinese-influenced dishes include siomai dumplings and pancit, a dish made with mixed vegetables and shrimp.

THE CUISINE

As a whole, Irene describes traditional Filipino food as being made up of a combination of strong sweet, sour and salty flavours, which are usually derived from soy, fish sauce and shrimp paste. These sauces are also used as dips for fried dishes such as pork rinds.

Peanut butter and coconut are used in stir-fries, curries and even desserts as the ingredients are considered healthy. A variety of vegetables are also used, with carrots, spinach, string beans and lettuce leaves being popular.

Anyone with Filipino friends will probably already know of their love for rice. "We like to eat plain

Text & styling NICOLA MONTEATH | Additional photography ANAS CHERUR

steamed rice with stir-fries and curries. A lot of Filipinos even eat fried rice for breakfast because it is filling," she says. Rice isn't flavoured, as Filipinos prefer the flavours to come through from the curries or sauces instead. Delicacies such as puto (rice cakes) are also eaten at breakfast or with a cup of black tea in the afternoon. Traditional curries such as Kare Kare, a stew with either ox tail, tripe or pork leg in a thick savoury peanut sauce and shrimp paste; and Adobo, a marinated chicken or pork in soy sauce, vinegar, garlic and onions, are not only some of the best known Filipino dishes, but can also be found on dinner tables around the country. Coconut chicken, oxtail peanut curry, noodles with shrimps, and a side of steamed vegetables are also popular choices for lunch or dinner.

"The taste of certain dishes differs slightly in every household. I like to add a little sugar to Kare Kare to get my kids to eat it and balance out the saltiness," she says. Not all Filipino food is heavy and rice-based, healthier options include a smoked fish, steamed and marinated in fish sauce and desserts such as Halo Halo, a heavy but healthy sweet treat with mixed sweetened banana, potato, mung beans, crushed ice and a drizzle of cream caramel on top. Ube Halaya, a dessert made with grated purple yam, condensed milk, butter and cheddar cheese is also a favourite with kids. Being a tropical nation, Filipinos eat a lot of local, seasonal fruits such as mangoes, rambutan and bananas.

Like anywhere else in Asia, street food is hugely popular, and of the variety on offer, chicken empanadas (another gift from the Spanish), pork barbecue, barbecued chicken intestine, grilled chicken feet, fish and squid balls and kikiams (a deep fried minced pork and shrimp roll) are probably the most popular, found in most kiosks in Manila. "When I was in school, I sold empanadas to my friends because they loved it – this was my source of income. I even remember offering some to a taxi driver in return for a complimentary ride!" she says.

THE CULTURE

The Philippines is primarily a Catholic nation, and so, many families make going to church and dining together afterwards, a family ritual – this is practiced by Filipinos living all around the world. Traditional foods are eaten after church on special occasions, such as on Misa de Gallo, where families go to church nine mornings before Christmas and gather afterwards to eat a selection of delicacies such as bibingka, a sweet rice cake topped with coconut eaten for breakfast; and puto bumbong, a purple coloured glutinous rice steamed in a bamboo stick and topped with shredded coconut.

Festive celebrations also see a large group of family and friends getting together for a lavish meal. For instance, on Christmas day, Filipinos eat a whole roasted pig (lechon) instead of a turkey. This is made Filipino-style, with fish and soy sauce and eaten with a selection of other dishes including Pancit Malabon, a noodle, pork and shrimp dish and desserts such as Ube Halaya. On New Year's Day, the most traditional thing to do is eat 12 round fruits and foods such as dumplings to bring luck all year round. Interestingly, a lot of Filipinos also don't cook chicken, as they believe their luck will fly off and they will encounter struggles throughout the year.



Irene became quite the cooking pro during her internship while at hotel management school

Afternoon tea, as Irene tells us, is quite popular with most families. Along with a cup of tea or coffee, and snacks such as empanadas, delicacies such as a steamed rice and coconut filled banana leaf (suman) are also eaten.

While Irene set foot in a kitchen when she was ten and hasn't looked back since, kids today aren't always interested in learning how to make traditional dishes anymore. Although Irene is trying to instill an interest in her children – they love baking rainbow coloured cakes!

With such a large community in this part of the world, Filipino foods and ingredients are easily available here, so why not head to the grocery store, pick up a few ingredients (as seen in Irene's shopping basket) and try making these delicious dishes at home? Here Irene shares some of her family favourites. >>


Irene Marina enjoys recreating traditional dishes for her family and friends



Irene's shopping basket

Oxtail kare kare

SERVES 4 ● PREP 10 MINS ● COOK 3 HRS Easy ❄

All specialty ingredients available in Asian stores.

1kg oxtail, tripe or beef slices, cut in 2 inch slices (Available in select supermarkets or Asian stores)
1l water
1 large onion, chopped
200g ground peanuts
60g peanut butter
3 tbsp of annatto seed powder (diluted in 40ml water)
120g ground rice, toasted
1 tbsp garlic, minced
4 eggplants, sliced
1 bundle of pechay
1 small banana flower bud, sliced
1 bundle of string beans, cut into 2 inch slices
Salt and pepper
120g shrimp paste, to serve

1 Boil water and add the oxtail and onions. Simmer for 2½ to 3 hrs or until tender. *This can also be cooked in a pressure cooker for 35 mins.*
2 Once the meat is tender, add the ground peanuts, peanut butter, and colouring (water from the annatto mixture) and simmer for 5 to 7 mins. Add the toasted ground rice and simmer for another 5 mins.
3 In a separate pan, sauté the garlic and add the eggplant, pechay banana flower bud and string beans. Cook for 5 mins. Transfer the cooked vegetables to the meat mix. Season and serve with shrimp paste on the side.





Lumpiang Sariwa (Spring roll with mixed vegetables in peanut sauce)

SERVES 4 ● PREP 10-15 MINS ● COOK 10 MINS Easy P

450g sweet potato, cubed
2 tbsp fish sauce
453g cabbage, shredded
250g carrots, julienned
120ml water
200g peanuts, crushed
6 lettuce leaves
200ml ground beef
250g shrimp, shelled and deveined
250g string beans (baguio beans), chopped
1 medium sized onion, chopped
3 tbsp garlic, minced
FOR THE CREPE WRAPPER
250g all-purpose flour
2 raw eggs
2 tbsp cooking oil
½ tsp salt
120ml milk
240ml water
FOR THE SAUCE
1 tbsp soy sauce
200g brown sugar
500ml water
½ pork or beef stock cube
1 tbsp garlic, minced
2 tbsp corn starch (diluted in 4 tbsp water)

1 In a heated pan, sauté the garlic and onions in cooking oil. Add the ground beef and cook until it turns light brown. Then add the shrimps and sweet potatoes and cook for 5 mins or until the potatoes are soft.
2 Add the carrots and string beans then mix with the other ingredients. Then add the cabbage and cook for 5 mins. Once cooked, add the fish sauce and mix. Set aside.
3 Mix all the crepe ingredients together and pour about a half cup in a pan. Tilt so that the liquid is distributed all over the pan evenly.
4 To make the sauce, bring the water to a boil. Then add the brown sugar and pork stock cube. Add salt and soy sauce and mix well. Pour the diluted cornstarch in the pan and cook until the sauce becomes thick. Set aside.
5 Place the crepe on a plate, add a lettuce leaf in the upper, middle part of the wrapper. Then spoon the filling on to it and place over the lettuce leaf. Close by folding the lower half and then rolling the sides to seal in the filling. Pour the sauce all over and garnish with crushed peanuts and garlic. GF

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MY KITCHEN

Jo Wheatley

The former BBC Great British Bake Off champion gives Holly Brooke-Smith a tour of her kitchen.

Photographs GEOFF WILKINSON

Since winning BBC Two's hugely popular baking challenge show, Jo Wheatley has written two baking books and started a home bakery school in her kitchen in Essex, UK. She also blogs at josblueaga.com.

Have you had this kitchen long?

We've been here for nine years and, up until a few weeks ago, the kitchen was all dark wood and quite a gloomy space. It's not very bright, so we had a new central light put in and more lights under the units.

How much time do you spend in here?

I cook almost every day and we always eat dinner in the kitchen. We probably only eat round the dining room table twice a year and I don't allow the kids to take the food out of the kitchen. It's not that hard to keep everyone fed – there's always an abundance of some recipe or other being developed in this house.

Did you cook much before the Bake Off?

When the children were little, I baked a lot – my sons were typical boys, always running around. So I used to bleach myself into a corner by cleaning the floor and leaving a patch by the worktop. I'd say they couldn't come in because their feet would get burnt on the floor and then I'd bake – that was my escapism. The boys like cookies and bread, but they're not massively keen on other sweet stuff, so they really enjoyed the new savoury traybake recipes in my latest book, *Home Baking* (Constable & Robinson).

Where do you keep everything?

This is the room in the house where I have clutter – although none of it is really clutter. I have a spare room that has floor-to-ceiling cupboards, which is where I keep all the stuff for my cookery classes, too. I need lots of storage and that's why I bought my pew, because there's a lot of space under the seat. There isn't any more room for the pots and pans, so the big shelf is the ideal way to display them. Also, you can find what you need straight away – it's more accessible.

What are the essentials?

I think you only really need mixing bowls, electric scales, a whisk, wooden spoons, spatulas and good tins. The other stuff is lovely, but not essential – they're a luxury. I'm a collector. I have my cookery





Cake stands hold pride of place in Jo's kitchen



Jo loves her VitBe loaf tin (available to buy from antiques-atlas.com)



Cookie cutters and utensils are hung to save space

books, Emma Bridgewater pieces, cake stands and cookie cutters. If I go to a shopping centre, I don't go into the clothes shops – I normally go to Lakeland or the John Lewis homeware section. The problem is that I end up buying everything.

What do you cook on?

I love my Aga – it's amazing for breads and scones, and fantastic for anything that needs either a really high temperature or a really low one. My two-door oven runs at 210C and 100C, so there's no in-between. The electric oven was new when we moved in, but after nine years we needed to replace it. I used it right through the Bake Off though, so after it saw 500 macaroons, I think it had had enough. If I'm developing recipes, I need the electric oven because everything has to be spot-on.

That's a lot of baking!

During filming we would go on set for two days, then we'd have four days off and I wouldn't come out of my kitchen. The table was always covered. During the bread basket week I made six – they were all overflowing with rolls and you couldn't see the table for bread. I had to ask my friends to come and take them. There was always so much food.

Are you a perfectionist?

I'll work on things until I perfect them. If I think there's a type of bread I've not done properly, then I have to make another one and make sure I can do it. I don't think you have to be a perfectionist to be a good baker, but you have to have perseverance.

If you do something wrong, you can normally still eat it, but it might not look great, so try it again. Usually it's mood that affects the result – if you feel aggravated, that's not the right time to be baking.

What are your baking plans for the future?

Ultimately, I'd love to have my garage converted into a really big school with portable stations and a separate entrance, and then I could keep my kitchen just for domestic cooking.

GET THE LOOK



To become a baking whiz like Jo, create 3D-shaped cookies and cut them precisely with these 4 butterfly cutters. Dhs30 for set of 4 at Lakeland.



Flatten this green Joseph folding colander to save room. Dhs95 at Ace Hardware.



Hanging this Mauviel M150s Saucepan (18cm) on the wall will keep it within easy reach and give you extra shelf space. Dhs790 at Tavola.

JO'S KITCHEN JOYS

- The oilcloth on the table is something I couldn't live without. It's the best bit of kit – you can knead bread on it and just wipe it over. You can roll pastry and it doesn't stick. It's like having a huge silicone mat.
- I have a KitchenAid mixer, which is amazing. The motor on it is fabulous – it's so strong, it's like a horse! I don't use it when I'm testing recipes though, as not everyone has one at home.
- We have two blackboards – one is mine and one is for my grandson Harvey.
- I adore cake stands. I think I have about 40 altogether.
- Microplane graters – I use them all the time.
- I love my Emma Bridgewater teapot. In the summer, I put big bunches of traditional English flowers from the garden in it.

Living the good life!

Find out everything you need to know about the inaugural Life and Style Show UAE, the largest such lifestyle event in the Middle East, to be held this month in Abu Dhabi, and read our interview with celebrity chef Gary Rhodes, who is a star attraction at the event.

Wish you could shop for home items, beauty products, gadgets, sports items, toys for the kids, and meet with celebrity chefs and experts from the industry, all under one roof? Your wish is soon to be granted! The Life and Style Show UAE, a three-day extravaganza taking place for the first time ever, from December 5 to 7 at The Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre (ADNEC) is sure to be a hit with everyone of all ages. The event comprises of six sections dedicated to Home and Living, Speed and Power, Fashion and Beauty, Gizmos, Gadgets and Tech, Sport and Leisure, and Toys, Hobbies and Games – all accessible with one ticket.

Make sure you check out these exciting attractions:

Cooking demonstrations: Watch celebrity chefs such as Gary Rhodes, Ali Abdwa from Emirates Palace, and Mac Aphithak Withojit from Anantara Hotels, cook up a storm, share expert advice and delight you with samplers of dishes.

The Demo Home: See the latest furniture trends up close at a model home, and view products and collections from brands such as Villeroy and Boch, BoConcept, Natuzzi and many more.

The Kenwood Live Cooking Theatre: Don an apron and hone your cooking skills, as you get to cook your own dishes alongside professional chefs, using Kenwood gadgets.

Santa's Grotto: Bring in the festive cheer by taking the kids to meet Santa.

BBC Good Food ME will be there at the Life & Style show in the Home & Living section, so do come by our stand and say hello! Editor Sudeshna Ghosh will be hosting a demo session on 'Festive Entertaining' on Saturday, 7 December at 6pm, so don't miss it! And if you sign up for an annual subscription at the event, you can stand to win an amazing prize – details on p122.

Need to know

- One day standard tickets are available for Dhs50, while advance tickets are available for Dhs24 per adult. Standard Weekend tickets (all three days) are available for Dhs100 per adult, Dhs50 if purchased in advance. Free for children under the age of 16. Tickets available from Virgin megastores and all leading ticket websites.
- Show Timings

December 5: 4–11pm
December 6: 2-11pm
December 7: 12 –10pm



CHEF-SPEAK

Michelin-starred celebrity chef Gary Rhodes will be doing cooking demos at the event. Here, he tells us what we can expect from him, and his plans for christmas this year, as well as shares one of his signature recipes:

What can we expect from you at the Life & Style Show UAE?

Visitors to the show will experience first-hand that changing classic recipes simply means building on tradition and treating a dish with the respect it deserves. You don't need a state-of-the-art kitchen to accomplish culinary feats. Rather, the key elements needed are high quality products and creativity. This is my approach to cooking which I will share with them. This sort of event offers an ideal platform to showcase classics and offer food connoisseurs a chance to sample my take on dishes that are beautifully simple to create – conveying that you don't have to invest a huge amount of time to eat good, fresh food. People that visit events like this are looking for innovative culinary presentations and the 'wow' factor. Which, I believe, can be most appreciated with even the simplest of dishes. I am looking forward to not just showcasing my craft, but more importantly, sharing my passion for cooking alongside the chefs from some of the best restaurants across the UAE. In the

vText by SUDESHNA GHOSH AND NICOLA MONTEATH

larger picture, the show will offer chefs an opportunity to collaborate in a way, introducing new twists to otherwise unexciting dishes, conveying our commitment to creating and maintaining fresh identities and concepts to an art form that continues to diversify.

You have recently opened a restaurant in Abu Dhabi, your first, and now this major event. How has the response been to you in the capital, and do you see Abu Dhabi emerging as a culinary destination?
British cuisine was almost unknown, not just in Abu Dhabi, but in the region in general, then people started to discover the classic dishes and the time came to take those dishes to the next level, which guests are finding to be true at Rhodes44 in the newly opened The St. Regis Abu Dhabi at Nation Towers. Rhodes44 celebrates the Arab tradition of 'family-style' dining, where many starters and main courses are made for sharing. As my first venture into local Middle Eastern cuisine, patrons are finding that, while I pay full respect to original recipes, I am introducing my own character and personality into each dish featured on the menu. The response to this approach has been quite positive, among Middle Easterners and expats alike.

I think Abu Dhabi has been blossoming into a world-class destination for culture, shopping, the art, and increasingly becoming a hub for epicurean connoisseurs, and is an ideal playground for culinary fusion.

Lots of exciting new things in the pipeline from Gary Rhodes at the moment it appears – can you share a few more details on the restaurant in Grosvenor House?
As far as the new Grosvenor operation is concerned, it will totally change from Rhodes Mezzanine of old, taking on a completely new face, in terms of style, food concept and design. It is to be titled 'Rhodes W1', with the chef's dream of a brand new kitchen! The opening date will be in the first half of 2014.

Finally, how will you be spending Christmas and what's on the menu?
Actually, I will be spending Christmas Day with my guests at Rhodes44, personally contributing to this year's festive memories for those dining at my restaurant and offering them a bespoke experience and an exclusive seasonal fare. The menu will highlight some of the house favourites – with yet another twist to each – and naturally, we can't have a proper Christmas Lunch without the roast turkey and all the trimmings!

Try this

Sticky toffee pudding with toffee sauce

SERVES 9 ● PREP 30 MINS ● COOK 25 MINS
A little effort



900ml water
750g dried dates (preferably Medjool dates)
1½ tsp bicarbonate soda
150g unsalted butter
750g caster sugar
6 eggs
375g self-raising flour
¾ tsp baking powder
3 tsp vanilla essence
Toffee ice cream, to serve
FOR THE TOFFEE SAUCE (TO SOAK)
450g soft dark brown sugar
310g whipping cream
260g unsalted butter
FOR THE TOFFEE SAUCE (TO BE SERVED SEPERATELY)
2.4l double cream
400g Demerara sugar
150g black treacle

1 To make the toffee soaking sauce, bring all ingredients to the boil and set aside.
2 Prepare baking tray by lightly buttering and lining with greaseproof paper.
3 Boil the dates in water for 5 mins or until very soft and then add the bicarbonate of soda. (The dates can also be puréed and passed once simmered in liquor.)
4 Cream together the sugar and butter until light and fluffy, then add the eggs and beat well. Add the vanilla essence, then fold in the self-raising flour, baking powder and dates.
5 Place the pudding mix on the baking tray and bake at 180C for 25 mins uncovered. Then bake for another 20-25 mins with tin foil on top. (The pudding can be cooked in small individual mini loaf tins and cooked at 180C for 16-18 mins.) Once cooked, turn immediately onto a parchment paper topped board, topping with another board to slightly press and condense the puddings. Once at room temperature, wrap each pudding in cling film, and keep aside.
6 Pour the toffee soaking sauce over the pudding and then allow to it to cool and rest.
7 To make the toffee sauce to serve separately, place all ingredients in a pan on a low heat and stir until all the ingredients are mixed together. Leave to simmer until it reaches the correct consistency, coating the back of a spoon – similar to a sauce anglaise thickness. The sauce can also be microwaved for 20 secs to re-heat.
8 To serve, cut the pudding in 100-120g rectangle portions, heat gently in the microwave for about 40 seconds. Serve the warm pudding with the toffee sauce on the side, and with a scoop of toffee ice cream. GF

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FINALISTS

RESTAURANTS - FINE DINING

CHEF OF THE YEAR

- **AMRISH SOOD –** RANG MAHAL BY ATUL KOCHHAR, *JW Marriott Marquis Dubai*
- **IZU ANI –** LA SERRE BISTRO & BOULANGERIE, *Vida Downtown*
- **JAMIE ROBERTSON –** GAUCHO, *DIFC*
- **ROBERTO SEGURA GONZALES –** THE ACT, *Shangri-la Hotel Dubai*

RESTAURANT OF THE YEAR

DUBAI

- **HAKKASAN,** *Jumeirah Emirates Towers*
- **LA PETITE MAISON,** *DIFC*
- **NOBU,** *Atlantis the Palm*
- **ZUMA,** *DIFC*

ABU DHABI

- **55 & 5TH, THE GRILL,** *The St. Regis Saadiyat Island Resort*
- **BORD EAU,** *Shangri-la Hotel, Qaryat Al Beri*
- **MARCO PIERRE WHITE STEAKHOUSE & GRILL,** *Fairmont Bab al Bahar*
- **QUEST,** *Jumeirah at Etihad Towers*

DOHA

- **GORDON RAMSAY RESTAURANT,** *The St. Regis Doha*
- **HAKKASAN,** *Doha*
- **MARKET BY JEAN GEORGES,** *W Doha Hotel & Residences*
- **SAFFRON LOUNGE BY VINEET,** *Cultural Village*

BEST NEW RESTAURANT

DUBAI

- **BLUE JADE,** *The Ritz Carlton JBR*
- **LE SERRE BISTRO & BOULANGERIE,** *Vida Downtown*
- **RANG MAHAL BY ATUL KOCHHAR,** *JW Marriott Marquis Dubai*
- **TOMO,** *Raffles Dubai*

ABU DHABI

- **BLUE MARLIN IBIZA,** *Al Jazira Resort*
- **RHODES 44,** *The St Regis Abu Dhabi*
- **SCOTT'S,** *Jumeirah at Etihad towers*
- **SPICE MELA,** *Rosewood Abu Dhabi*

BEST EUROPEAN RESTAURANT

- **ELIA,** *Majestic Hotel Tower Dubai*
- **LA PETITE MAISON,** *DIFC*
- **REFLETS PAR PIERRE GAGNAIRE,** *InterContinental Dubai Festival City*
- **VILLA BEACH RESTAURANT,** *Jumeirah Beach Hotel*

BEST ASIAN RESTAURANT

- **HAKKASAN,** *UAE*
- **MANGO TREE,** *Souk Al Bahar*
- **PAI THAI, AL QASR HOTEL,** *Madinat Jumeirah*
- **ZUMA,** *DIFC*

BEST CONTEMPORARY BRITISH RESTAURANT

- **RHODES TWENTY10,** *Le Royal Meridien Beach Resort & Spa*
- **RIVINGTON GRILL,** *Dubai*
- **THE GRAMERCY,** *DIFC*
- **THE IVY,** *Jumeirah Emirates Towers*

BEST LATIN AMERICAN

- **ASADO,** *The Palace Downtown Dubai*
- **GAUCHO,** *DIFC*
- **LA PARILLA,** *Jumeirah Beach Hotel*
- **TORO TORO,** *Grosvenor House*

BEST INDIAN RESTAURANT

- **AMALA,** *Jumeirah Zabeel Saray*
- **CHOR BAZAAR,** *Movenpick Ibn Battuta Gate Hotel*
- **INDEGO BY VINEET,** *Grosvenor House*
- **PATIALA,** *Souk Al Bahar*

BEST MIDDLE EASTERN RESTAURANT

- **AL NAFOORAH,** *Jumeirah Emirates Towers*
- **EWAAN,** *The Palace Downtown Dubai*
- **MARRAKECH,** *Shangri-la Hotel Dubai*
- **OTTOMANS,** *Grosvenor House*

BEST STEAKHOUSE

- **55 & 5TH, THE GRILL,** *The St. Regis Saadiyat Island Resort*
- **JW STEAKHOUSE,** *JW Marriott Dubai*
- **RUTH'S CHRIS STEAK HOUSE,** *The Address Dubai Marina*
- **THE MEAT CO.,** *UAE*

BEST ITALIAN

- **BICE,** *Hilton Dubai Jumeirah Resort*
- **BUSSOLA,** *Westin Dubai Mina Seyahi Resort & Marina*
- **ROBERTO'S,** *DIFC*
- **ROSSO,** *Amwaj Rotana*

BEST BRUNCH

- **THE FRIDAY BRUNCH AT AL QASR,** *Madinat Jumeirah*
- **BUBBALICIOUS,** *Westin Dubai Mina Seyahi Resort & Marina*
- **FRIDAY BRUNCH AT SPECTRUM ON ONE,** *Fairmont Dubai*
- **JAZZ & BUBBLES BRUNCH AT THE TALK RESTAURANT & LOUNGE,** *Mövenpick Hotel Jumeirah Beach*

BEST SEAFOOD

- **BICE MARE,** *Souk Al Bahar*
- **FINZ,** *Beach Rotana Abu Dhabi*
- **PIERCHIC,** *Al Qasr Hotel, Madinat Jumeirah*
- **SEAFOOD MARKET,** *Le Meridien Dubai*

BEST EXPERIENTIAL DINING

- **THE ACT DUBAI,** *Shangri-la Dubai*
- **BATEAUX DUBAI,** *Dubai Creek*
- **BLUE FLAME COOKING CLASSES,** *Jumeirah Creekside Hotel*
- **DINE IN THE DARK,** *Fairmont Dubai*

RESTAURANTS - CASUAL DINING

BEST INTERNATIONAL

- **CLAW BBQ CRABSHACK & GRILL,** *Souk Al Bahar*
- **JAMIE'S ITALIAN,** *Dubai Festival City*
- **LAFAYETTE GOURMET,** *The Dubai Mall*
- **THE CHEESECAKE FACTORY,** *Dubai*

BEST ASIAN

- **CHIMES RESTAURANT,** *Al Barsha*
- **LEMONGRASS,** *UAE*
- **NOODLE HOUSE,** *Jumeirah Emirates Towers*
- **PF CHANGS,** *Dubai*

BEST INDIAN

- **BARBEQUE DELIGHTS,** *JBR & Emaar Boulevard*
- **CLAYPOT,** *Citymax Hotel Bur Dubai*
- **GAZEBO,** *Dubai*
- **ZAFRAN,** *UAE*

BEST MIDDLE EASTERN

- **AL HALLAB,** *Dubai*
- **ARZ LEBANON,** *UAE*
- **REEM AL BAWADI,** *Dubai*
- **ZAATAR W ZEIT,** *UAE*

BEST CAFÉ

- **CAFE BATEEL,** *UAE*
- **JONES THE GROCER,** *UAE*
- **PAUL BAKERY & CAFÉ,** *UAE*
- **THE ONE KHALIDIYA THEATRE & RESTAURANT,** *Abu Dhabi*

HOME COOKING - INGREDIENTS

FAVOURITE SUPERMARKET

- **CARREFOUR**
- **GEANT**
- **LULU HYPERMARKET**
- **SPINNEYS**
- **WAITROSE**

FAVOURITE SPECIALTY FOOD STORE

- **CHEZ CHARLES**
- **DOWN TO EARTH ORGANIC**
- **MARKET & PLATTERS**
- **MARKS & SPENCERS**
- **RIPE MARKET**

FAVOURITE STORE CUPBOARD PRODUCT BRAND

- **CALIFORNIA GARDEN**
- **HEINZ**
- **KNORR**
- **NESTLÉ**
- **SACLA**

FAVOURITE DAIRY BRAND

- **AL AIN**
- **AL MARAI**
- **AL RAWABI**
- **ELLE & VIRE**
- **LURPAK**

FAVOURITE TEA BRAND

- **BROOKE BOND**
- **DILMAH**
- **LIPTON**
- **TETLEY**
- **TWININGS**

FAVOURITE COFFEE BRAND

- **COFFEE PLANET**
- **CONTINENTAL**
- **NESCAFE**
- **NESPRESSO**
- **STARBUCKS**

FAVOURITE JUICE BRAND

- **BARAKAT**
- **CERES**
- **DEL MONTE**
- **FLORIDA'S NATURAL**
- **LACNOR**

FAVOURITE OLIVE OIL BRAND

- **BERTOLLI**
- **BORGES**
- **FIGARO**
- **RAFAEL SALGADO**
- **RAHMA**

HOME COOKING - ACCESSORIES

FAVOURITE LARGE KITCHEN APPLIANCE BRAND

- **BOSCH**
- **LG**
- **MIELE**
- **SAMSUNG**
- **TEKA**

FAVOURITE TABLEWARE STORE

- **CRATE AND BARREL**
- **HOME CENTRE**
- **JASHANMAL**
- **LAKELAND**
- **TAVOLA**

FAVOURITE SMALL KITCHEN APPLIANCE BRAND

- **BRAUN**
- **CUISINART**
- **KENWOOD**
- **KITCHEN AID**
- **PHILIPS**

DUBAI CALENDAR

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TASTE OF THE *world*

All the foodie news from around the globe.

HAUTE CUISINE IN HONG KONG

Hong kong seems to be the place to be this festive season for a gastronomic feast. Here are two gourmet options worth travelling there for:

✶ Gold by Harlan Goldstein in Central, a Michelin star restaurant, will be serving up a special Christmas Eve dinner featuring a rare French organic rooster for mains, and festive desserts. The New Year's Eve dinner offers a Spanish-Mediterranean menu including delicacies like Sushi-style Spanish blue-fin tuna and foie gras. From HK$980 (around Dhs460) per person, www.gold-dining.com.

✶ Michelin starred restaurant L'Altro will serve up an eight course French-Italian themed Christmas menu with Brittany frog, and Risotto with Alba white truffle, just some of the delights on offer, while on New Year's Eve, the gastronomic fanfare will include Caviar cannelloni and Scampi pasta mousse. From HK$1,380 per person, www.laltro.hk.

Island flavours

A trip to the Maldives immediately conjures up images of luxury overwater villas, sandy beaches, marine riches – and little else. While that is definitely what one goes to this island nation for, one new resort is doing its bit to reconnect guests with the local culture. At the Beach House Iruveli resort, located in the northernmost atoll of the Maldives, you can not only enjoy traditional Maldivian cuisine in an authentic alfresco setting at the newly opened Kakuni Village restaurant, but also sign up for cooking classes with the passionate Maldivian chef. Local delicacies like green mango and papaya sala, braised tuna in spicy coconut curry, and coconut bread are served in a handcrafted wooden box called a malaafai, traditionally used for festive celebrations. Other activities at the resort to discover the local culture include visits to nearby villages and traditional sailboat cruises. Festive season packages which include Santa Claus visits and happy hour sundowners start from US$832 (Dhs3,050) per night, www.beachhousecollection.com.



White Christmas in France

55%

of travellers would give up TV for the perfect cup of coffee, according to a study by Le Méridien Hotels & Resorts

Plan a European family getaway this festive season at the luxurious Hôtel Ermitage Evian, where special programmes are planned for kids – from sports activities to craft workshops. While children are busy in the Kids resort, the grown-ups can indulge with activities such as walking tours and foodie experiences. With plenty of skiing options, a magical atmosphere created with the aromas of gingerbread and cinnamon enjoyed fireside, and Santa visits planned for Christmas Eve, this is sure to be a holiday to remember! Prices start from €183 (around Dhs900) per person per night, visit www.evianresort.com.

Creative pursuits



The Hotel Palace in Berlin is taking the concepts of food and fashion, and turning it on its head. At the Michelin starred restaurant First Floor, chef Matthias Diether's cutting edge culinary creations have been showcased in a series of uber-styled images shot by renowned fashion photographer Kerstin zu Pan, with candyfloss scarves and sesame seed beads or edible soil tattoos telling stories that you can't help but listen to! Two of the images in the series are on display at the restaurant, with the awe-inspiring aesthetics certainly providing inspiration to any guest. www.firstfloor.palace.de.

Text SUDESHNA GHOSH | Photographs SUPPLIED

Prague's historic Old Town Square is where it all happens over Christmas!



Gifts galore at the Christmas markets



Foodie treats are everywhere

Prague *on your plate*

Ishita Saha finds this pretty East European city to be a culinary revelation, made even more magical with the traditional Christmas markets at this time of the year.

Before I landed in Praha or Prague, I had a notion that Czech food consisted only of Goulash borrowed from Hungary, that had to be guzzled down with Pivo or beer. The receptionist of my hotel apartment – who doubles up as a city guide during the day – did advise me to taste Guláš or Goulash cooked in the Czech style, in small family run restaurants from one of the less known alleys. But she also told me about the sausages that hang temptingly from the roadside mobile kiosks and other traditional home-cooked Czech food served by the locals at make-shift food stalls, which are set up in the heart of the city during the weekends. And traditional sauces with wild game that is served in the well known restaurants in the New Town. And her list went on and on, making me forget that I had started out with only goulash in my tasting wish list!

The beauty of Prague gradually dawns upon the visitor. Voted one of the ten most beautiful cities in Europe, the architecture of the buildings reflect the changes that the city and the region's history has encompassed. Picturesque boulevards line the Vltava river, and along the main roads and squares within the city as well as the car-free historical town centre. Unaffected to a large extent during World War II, Prague had remained sheltered until the fall of the Iron Curtain. Staromstské námstí or the Old Town Square in the heart of historical Prague – where you can see more different architectural styles by standing in one spot just looking around 360-degrees than entire cities can boast – is testament to this fact.

Street side deliciousness

The history of a region shapes its cuisine as well. For centuries, the Czech cuisine had remained influenced by its bigger, better known neighbours' gastronomy, whether it's schnitzels and strudels from Austria and Germany or goulashes from Hungary. But there is a vast treasure trove of unique Czech dishes that are slowly coming into the limelight. A slow walk through the city of Prague reveals just that. The streets throng with cafes and restaurants, the most unassuming ones, proudly declaring 'Traditional Czech Food available' serving the heartiest meals.

Václavské námstí or Wenceslas Square, one of the main squares in Prague, was a good starting point for my foodie explorations. A witness to many historical events, demonstrations, celebrations and public gatherings, this square is a part of the historic centre of Prague and a UNESCO World Heritage site. Interestingly, during the Middle Ages, the square was used originally to accommodate horse markets. Wenceslas Square, although a traditional European city square, takes the shape of a long rectangle rather than a square, and reminded me of Parisian boulevards. Flanked by restaurants of various kinds, a few belonging to hotels, which were probably famous once upon a time, this place is a foodie's paradise.

Not least for the roadside kiosks lining both sides of the historic square selling everything from souvenirs to drinks and newspapers, which offer a contrast to all the fashionable stores housed in the surrounding old buildings. But what caught my eye were the mobile kiosks with hanging sausages, lining up the boulevard at 500 metre intervals – this was like a dream come true for me, in which I hop from one kiosk to another munching on sausages of different kinds! One particular stall, with a vivacious lady behind the counter who I decided to make my adopted Czech Momma, quickly became my favourite for her double dose of caramelised onions. Every time I'd pass by, she'd invite me to join the long queue. We did end up in her kiosk more than anywhere else and gorged on the delicious sausages at various odd hours, these sausage stands most popular with the nightclub-returning crowd.


You're never too far from a roadside kiosk



Sausages are an easy-to-grab snack on the go


Czech goulash is a thick meaty stew

Many variations are available – dark meat, white meat and red meat. One can munch on the Bavarian, Italian or Polish sausages – both spicy and non-spicy. Cupped in between toasted or untoasted Chléb/Chleba or rye bread and jutting out of the bread like a banana boat, these giant foot-long sausages are smothered with a pungent mustard sauce or ketchup and generous amounts of caramelised onion.

Another must-have in Prague is dumplings – whether it's in a small family run café or at exclusive restaurants like the Romantic in Grand Hotel Evropa, dumplings can be subject of heated culinary debates. Knedlíky, as they are called, are made from either wheat or potatoes, the brambory. These are steamed and made into large rolls and sliced into smaller dumplings just before serving. Fluffy, light and spongy, the dumplings soak up the meat sauce of the goulash that it's served with, like a thirsty traveller gulping down water. Often, the dumplings are filled with meat or spinach or sour cabbage, with caramelised onions and braised cabbage served as a Píloha or a side dish.

Dumplings are probably the best accompaniment to the aforementioned goulash, which in Czech Republic, is quite different from the better known Hungarian goulash – while the Czech Goulash is a thick stew usually made from beef, onions, herbs and spices, the latter is served more like a soup.

Prague also has a very unique café culture with each Kavárna or café being a little different from each other. Most of them have history written on their walls with noted intellectuals, artists, thinkers and writers having met in their premises. The café menus are extensive, serving delicious light meals and desserts, and some very reliable vegetarian dishes. These cafés are some of the best places to try the local beers, after a brewery tour. Home to the famous Pilsner Urquell and Budweiser Budvar, the Czech have a rich tradition of brewing, and beer tours with a visit to a local brewery is a must. >>

Photographs by writer and PHOTOS.COM

While the street food is definitely going to reel you in with its variety and flavour, Prague is no stranger to fine dining either. Allegro, which had opened in the Four Seasons Hotel, received the first Michelin star amongst all the ex-Communist countries of Central Europe, but is now closed. As of 2012, Prague is home to two Michelin star restaurants, including La Degustation Bohême Bourgeoise in Haštalská Street, serving food that I would call art on a plate. The menu serves contemporary takes on Bohemian cuisine, and has been marked by Anthony Bourdain as one of the best culinary experiences in the world. The Czech menu of Le Bohême is an interpretation of the refined culinary school of Marie B. Svobodová from the late 19th century, and is inspired by seasonal and regional availability of ingredients. The restaurant offers only two set menus – the Degustation Boheme Bourgeoise, consisting of six courses, and the Degustation Du Chef, which is eleven courses. Visiting over the festive period, you will find traditional Christmas delicacies which, to my surprise, feature fish quite heavily, rather than roast turkey. Among the few dishes that still linger on in my taste buds, the Tebo trout with a sauce made from Moravian sparkling wine and served with cabbage and kohlrabi, holds centrestage. Other dishes that come to mind include a freshly smoked beef tongue served with creamy purée of yellow peas, and apples with a strong whiff of marjoram, and a simple langoustine with sprinkling of chilli flakes and sesame. An evening here truly unfolds more like an opera rather than an evening of luxurious fine dining!

Festive flavours

A highlight of Prague during the festive season is of course the Christmas markets, which are considered to be among the most beautiful in the world. Indeed they are. The decorated Christmas tree in the Old Town Square, with the heritage buildings in the background, definitely stood taller





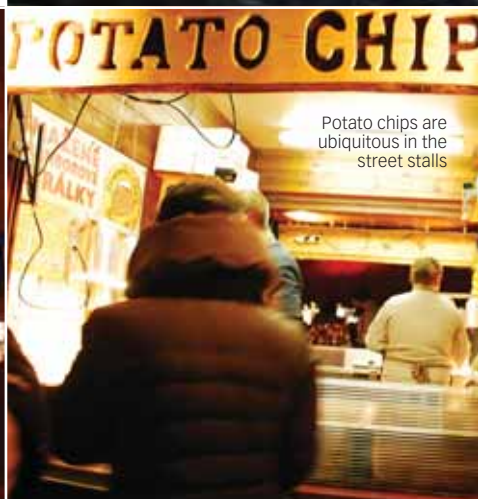
The festive season gives Prague a magical setting



Prague is also pastry heaven



The U Ševce Matouse restaurant was formerly a cobbler's shop!



Potato chips are ubiquitous in the street stalls

than some of the others I've seen in other European cities. With hovering clouds and snowflakes drifting down as if in slow motion, it is a fairytale setting that has to be seen to be believed.

The stalls selling traditional Christmas goodies and Czech pastries like Trdelink flood the square in front of the Orloj or the famous Astronomical Clock (dating back to the medieval era). To feel it throb, take a seat in one of the (slightly overpriced, thanks to being tourist haunts) restaurants in the huge courtyard of Old Town Square, order some Svaák, the local mulled wine, and soak up the sights of swivelling Bohemian crystal stars, the sounds of the curly potato chips being fried and the clinking of celebratory glasses, and the fragrances of the slow-roasting meats.

Other than the Old Town Square, the other popular Christmas market is held across the Charles Bridge in the nearby Wenceslas Square. Staying here meant that I was, in effect, living inside a winter wonderland. Chalet-style kiosks with sloping roofs line the square, selling traditional handmade artefacts and glassware, scented candles, Christmas decorations, beautiful hand-embroidered lace tablecloths and traditional costumes. Alongside plenty of food of course, the aromas of which drift through the air. The variations of country sausages, hams and traditional Czech food (served by weight) here are mindboggling – from Paprikový tocenec (beef sausages), and the coiled Vinná klobása sausages to Grilovaný syr (flavourful cheese patties), a Bramborové (boiled, roasted, mashed potatoes) or

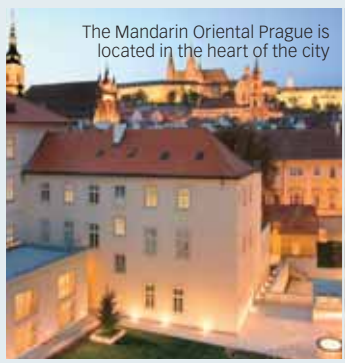

The Charles bridge is one of the city's iconic landmarks

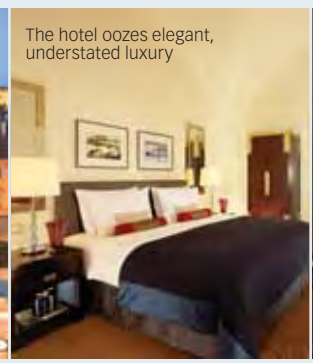
a Czech Halousky (a smaller but tastier version of gnocchi made with flour and mashed potatoes).

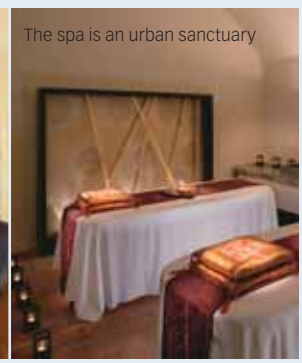
While the Old Town Square is where most tourists throng, the Nové Mesto or the New Town is no less attractive, with quaint restaurants housed in historic buildings surrounding the Prague castle, usually serving traditional Czech food. It was here that I stumbled upon Restaurant U Ševce Matouse, a restaurant that once housed a cobbler's shop – and enjoyed a sumptuous Christmas meal at a reasonable price. I knew I was in good company when I realised that the likes of Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt have brought their custom to this restaurant!

Clearly Brangelina are on to something! With its many cultural influences, a rich history, taste variations and intricacy amalgamating in one cuisine, Prague, was indeed an unexpected discovery for me – and should be on every foodie's travel wish-list. GF

TRAVEL DIARY


The Mandarin Oriental Prague is located in the heart of the city


The hotel oozes elegant, understated luxury


The spa is an urban sanctuary

GETTING THERE & AROUND: Various airlines offer direct flights to Prague including Emirates (tickets from Dhs2,945, emirates.com), but you could also take the scenic route and fly into Vienna (tickets on Emirates cost from Dhs2,255), which is a short five hour flight from Dubai, then drive to Prague from there, which will take under four hours. Hertz offers a convenient car rental option from Vienna airport, with friendly, efficient service and a wide range of cars from small to luxury options. More details on www.hertz.at.

STAYING THERE:
Check into the The Mandarin Oriental Prague to enjoy luxury in a location that is both conveniently central, yet tucked away in a quiet cobbled street on the left bank of the Vlatva river, away from the tourist hustle of the Old Town. Housed in a historic monastery dating back to the 14th century, the cluster of low-rise buildings, which have since been carefully restored to become the award-winning luxury hotel it is today, still have history whispering thorough their walls. A true retreat in the heart of the city, in the oldest settled part of Prague in fact, the hotel is home to 99 luxuriously appointed rooms, fitted out with all the mod cons you will need, and amenities including Aromatherapy Associates bathroom products, and thoughtful touches like pillow sleep sprays provided on the bedside. The brand's Asian heritage comes through in little touches like the Chinese lacquered vanity boxes in the bathrooms and the restaurant's Asian-inspired menu.

Essensia, the hotel's main restaurant, does away with all the bustle associated with breakfast buffets, in its intimate setting made up of a series of five interconnected rooms with vaulted ceilings – another example of the building's monastic heritage. At night, it turns into a fine dining venue where executive chef Jiri Stift serves up contemporary Czech cuisine inspired by seasonal ingredients, as well as Asian delicacies.

With attractions including Prague Castle and the Charles Bridge all a short distance away, you will no doubt be walking about a lot, so follow up a day of pavement-pounding with a treatment at the luxe spa. Located in a former Renaissance chapel, this outhouse building has been converted into a tranquil oasis of calm. Don't miss the signature massage where aromatherapy is combined with a fusion of Western and Asian massage techniques – guaranteed to ease travel-weary muscles into relaxation!

The hotel concierge is an efficient guide to whatever is going on in the city, and this superlative service is echoed across all the staff, with every guest being made to feel a warm welcome.

Room rates start from Euro315 (Dhs1,560), Winter Escape package is priced at Euro355 (stay three nights, pay for two). Visit mandarinoriental.com/prague.

- Sudeshna Ghosh



The Jashanmal Home Store provided the perfect setting for such a culinary event

Festive flavours

Give your festive menu an Argentinian twist this year, with these recipes that Gabriel Stivala, chef de cuisine at Asado restaurant, Palace Downtown Dubai hotel, showcased at our recent Food Club masterclass held at the Jashanmal Home Store, The Dubai Mall.


BBC Good Food ME Editor Sudeshna Ghosh welcomes the audience


Audience members were all eyes and ears

An enthusiastic group of Food Club members gathered at the Jashanmal Home Store in Dubai Mall last month to watch the talented chef Gabriel Stivala demonstrate a delicious three-course menu of traditional delicacies typical of an Argentinian Christmas. Interspersed with cooking tips, foodie stories, and lots of questions and answers, the evening saw the audience enjoying not only a cooking lesson but also tasty samplers of each dish. Three lucky winners walked away with exciting prizes at the raffle draw, including dining and cooking class vouchers from The Palace Hotel Downtown Dubai, and a shopping voucher from Jashanmal Home store. That's not all, every single guest at the event also enjoyed a 20 per cent discount on any purchases made that day – many of them stayed back after the masterclass to get ahead on their Christmas shopping at the beautifully decked out store filled with festive goodies. Even if you missed out on the event, you can still recreate the dishes with these recipes!


Guests got up close to get the perfect shot


Chef interacted personally with the guests


Delicious samplers were passed around for everyone to try the dishes


Sanaz from the Palace Downtown Dubai hands over a gift voucher to a lucky winner


Apeksha from Jashanmal gave away a shopping voucher to another winner

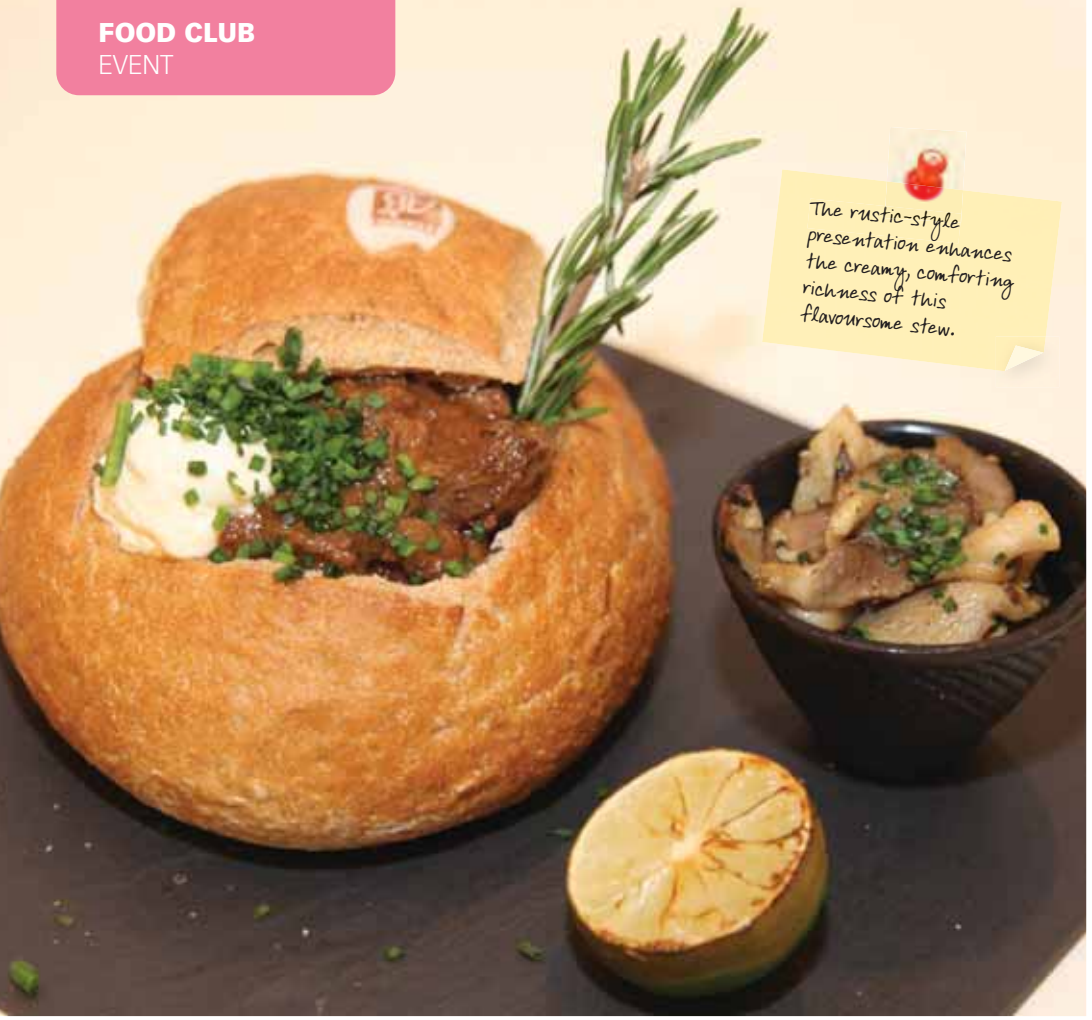


Cured duck magret with corn bread and mango sorbet

SERVES 4 ● PREP 30 MINS ● COOK 10 MINS

300g fresh duck magret
400g sea rock salt
200g white sugar
5g black pepper corn
3 brines of fresh rosemary
FOR THE CORN BREAD
200ml milk
3 eggs
300ml cream
5g paprika, fennel seeds, salt, chilli flakes, mix
50g sugar
150g flour
150g polenta
5g baking powder
FOR THE FRESH MANGO SORBET
150g water
5ml lemon juice
75g sugar
300g fresh mango

1 Mix the salt and the sugar together. Add the rosemary and black pepper and place the fresh duck magret into this mixture. Cover the duck with the marinade and mix. Place in the chiller for 48 hrs.
2 Rinse the duck under cold water to remove the marinade, wrap in a clean cloth and place back in the chiller for a few hours. Slice finely.
3 To make the cornbread, mix the milk, eggs and cream together in a large bowl with a rubber spatula. Add the spices, salt and sugar until they dissolve. Add the flour and the polenta along with the baking powder. Leave the mix to rest for 1 hr, and bake in a loaf tin at 200C for 20 mins.
4 Bring the water, lemon juice and sugar to a boil. Add the fresh mango and blend to make a smooth, silky mix. Freeze for 12 hrs and then grind until it becomes a sorbet texture. Freeze until ready to serve.
5 Place the sliced turkey on a plate, add a quenelle of the mango sorbet and a few mango cubes for garnish. Serve with cornbread. >>



The rustic-style presentation enhances the creamy, comforting richness of this flavoursome stew.



Patagonian venison stew with wild mushrooms and country bread

SERVES 4 ● PREP 50 MINS ● COOK 30 MINS

500g venison, cut into 3 cm squares (can be swapped with beef in this recipe)
100g onion (cut into 2 by 2 squares), diced
500ml red wine
2 tbsp olive oil
200ml vegetable stock
20g celery
100g carrots (2 by 2 squares), diced
50g leeks
4 pcs of country sourdough bread (400g each)
Sour cream (optional)
FOR THE MIREPOIX
5 bay leaves
2 brines of thyme
10 black pepper corns
20g rosemary
FOR THE WILD MUSHROOMS
300g wild mushrooms
1 tbsp fresh parsley, chopped
1 tbsp fresh garlic, chopped

1 Place the venison and vegetables with the mirepoix and cover completely with the wine and stock.
2 Allow the meat to marinate for 12 hrs. Strain and keep the liquid and vegetables aside.
3 Heat olive oil in a large frying and sear the venison until golden brown. Remove and set aside. Add the vegetables, 1 tbsp flour and some of the marination liquid to make a thick broth. Place the venison back in and cook until tender – approximately 35 mins. Season towards the end.
4 In a frying pan, heat olive oil until it starts smoking. Add the mushrooms and sauté until golden brown. Add the garlic, parsley, black pepper and salt.
5 Scrape out a hollow inside the country sourdough breads to use as containers for the stew. Spoon the stew into the bread, add a dollop of sour cream on top, if you like, and serve with the mushrooms on the side.

Asado style rice pudding

SERVES 4 ● PREP 30 MINS ● COOK 19 HRS Easy

A home-style dessert gets a gourmet makeover in this recipe

100g long grain rice
600g cream
1.5l milk
350g sugar
2 cinnamon sticks
Orange and lemon zest

1 Bring the rice, cream and milk to a boil along with half of the sugar, cinnamon and zests.
2 Cook for about 30 mins, stirring the rice, cream and milk continuously. When the rice starts to get soft, add the rest of the sugar and cook for about 10 more mins. Set aside to rest for 20 mins, then keeping aside 800g of the pudding for the ice cream, place the rest in the freezer.
3 To make the rice pudding cracker, take 3 tbsp of the rice pudding and blend until it becomes a puree. Place the mix in between 2 baking papers and make it as thin as possible by rolling with a rolling pin all over it. Spread the ground rice over a baking paper and dry in the oven for 6hrs at 80C. Add some oil to a pot and when it reaches 180C, deep fry the cracker for about 1 min. Keep aside in a dry place.
4 To make the rice pudding ice cream, remove a quarter of the rice grains from the pudding that has been kept aside, and blend the rest of the mix to make a smooth mixture. Freeze for 12 hrs and blend again to form a smooth, ice cream texture. Add the rice grains.
5 To serve, place 1 tbsp of the rice pudding on the bottom of a wine glass. Add 1 big scoop of the ice cream on top, and then top with the cracker.

Want to be a part of our next Food Club event? Then sign up for a Premium membership (details on p120) to get priority confirmation. You can also like us on **facebook.com/bbcgoodfoodme** and follow us on **twitter.com/bbcgoodfoodme** to get all our latest updates and join the foodie conversation!

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زيت زيتون
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Bon Appétit experiences with Emirates NBD

The Lafayette Gourmet food hall was turned into a bustling kids activity centre last month, when the latest Emirates NBD Bon Appetit Experiences evening, a hands-on children's culinary event, was hosted by *BBC Good Food Middle East*.

Lafayette Gourmet was the venue for the unique children's event that *BBC Good Food ME* held last month as part of our ongoing series of Bon Appetit Experiences events with Emirates NBD. Dozens of Emirates NBD privileged customers and their little ones found themselves at the colourful venue, which was set up with three different stations for making cookies, pasta and chocolate mousse.

"I did not just want to do a demo where the kids just watched and got bored, I wanted them to get involved as much as possible and get their hands dirty – after washing them of course!" said Russel Impiazi, Culinary Director, Galleries Lafayette. And get their hands dirty they did, with everyone getting stuck into making and decorating their own cookies, learning to make pasta from scratch, and getting gourmet with chocolate mousse (who knew it was this easy?). The kids had a whale of a time, while the grown-ups enjoyed mini plates of canapés such as wasabi prawns, braised beef short rib with crispy fried ginger, mini mixed pakoras, and buffalo mozarella with heirloom tomatoes, while running around and helping the little chefs produce their creations, of course!


Experts were on hand at every step


The kids enjoyed making their own cookies


BBC Good Food ME's Lauren Wing welcoming guests


All the kids got mini aprons to wear and take home


Mums got involved in helping their children

Vox Pops

"It's the first time we are doing something like this, I hope we get to do it again,"

- Shima, Ella's mother


Children learnt how to make pasta from scratch


One little chef shows off the fruit of her labours

Vox Pops

"It's lovely - all the kids are very curious about cooking, they're always asking about food. It's a joyful experience for the little ones, they can get messy and we don't have to clean up!"

~ Monique, Chloe's mother



All guests walked away with goodie bags

Vox Pops

"I didn't expect this – it is very well organised and the kids love it!

– AJ Al Rashid, Arwa's mother



One lucky guest won a hamper from Lafayette Gourmet

Vox Pops

"It was great to see so many kids with a real interest in getting involved with food. Hats off to the mums and dad who were there to encourage them, I hope it's a trend that continues to grow. I think we found some budding young chefs for the future!"

~ Russel Impiazi



Lafayette Gourmet also gage away a brunch for four to another lucky winner



Child's play

Get your kids at home to try this easy COOKIE RECIPE

125g butter
125g brown sugar
125g whole sugar
310g flour
2-3 eggs
15g baking powder
125g chocolate chips

1 Mix the butter and sugars together, then add the flour and mix until it reaches a breadcrumb consistency.
2 Add the eggs and baking powder, and lastly the chocolate chips. Mix to form a dough.
3 Roll into 1 inch balls and place on a baking tray. Bake at 160 for 8 mins, larger cookies will require a couple of minutes longer.





The 'Bon Appétit Experience' is an extension of the 'Bon Appétit' programme that was launched in 2011 by Emirates NBD, which enables cardholders to enjoy exclusive discounts of up to 30 per cent at over 1,500 restaurants in the UAE, Middle East and Europe, when they use their Emirates NBD Debit or Credit Card.

Bon Appétit from Emirates NBD

ONLY DHS120!

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This month, Food Club Premium members can get

FREE! Voucher booklets for the Souk Festive Market, Madinat Jumeirah.

Limited numbers available. Log on to www.bbcgoodfoodme.com for details on how to avail yours. The Souq Festive Market runs from December 17-27.



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*Membership fee is Dhs120 | Terms and conditions apply | Valid for Premium Food Club members only | All Premium members will receive further communications over email on how to avail of the offers

Sign up now!

Email Rochelle.almeida@cpimediagroup.com or Marizel.salvador@cpimediagroup.com to sign up. You will receive regular newsletters with details of how to avail of the offers.

Only open to BBC Good Food ME subscribers/Premium members

Snapshots from our first Food Club Premium members' event

Our sixth anniversary celebrations last month saw a cosy group of readers enjoying a relaxed, intimate evening of cooking, eating and fun.

A select few of our privileged Food Club Premium members were treated to a special evening at Blue Flame restaurant of Jumeirah Creekside Hotel, where they enjoyed a hands-on cooking class with chef Dannet Dsouza and the *BBC Good Food Middle East* team in the nifty cooking pod, followed by a sit-down four course dinner washed down with beverages.

Themed around our sixth birthday, the evening started with a welcome drink and introduction to the menu, after which the group headed into the cooking pod to start prep for the main course. Just in case there was any worry of not having enough food to eat later on (there was plenty!), we enjoyed nibbling into delicious savoury herb-infused muffins with delectable dips and a creative carrot brulee with orange salsa amuse bouche as we got stuck into the cooking. Chef Dannet shared useful tips and tricks with us along the way, and very soon, it was time to head to our private table for the starter and soup courses. We went back into the kitchen to finish off the main course, pan-frying the seabass, and then took it back to the table to enjoy. From there on out, it was just kicking back and enjoying friendly chatter, as we were given the VIP treatment with the pre-dessert and dessert courses being brought out for us to enjoy. Each course saw a member of the kitchen team come out to introduce it, a nice touch giving us the opportunity to thank the talent behind the delicious food.

The lucky readers left with the recipes, as well as a goodie bag with gifts from *BBC Good Food ME* and Blue Flame, and the memory of a lovely evening spent with good food and making new friends.

ON THE MENU

Carrot brulée
Orange salsa

Foie gras and duck terrine
Baby beets, pickled shitake and carrot duck crumble

Bouillabaisse
Cod cheeks, scallops and corn purée

Seabass
Cauliflower purée, asparagus, spinach and hollandaise

Mandarin Sorbet
Candied hazelnuts with coffee foam

Baked NY Cheesecake
Blueberry compote and frozen guava yoghurt



Photographs ANAS CHERUR

Blue Flame offers daily cooking classes for up to five people per session, making for a great way to celebrate a special occassion with friends or simply to hone one's cooking skills with the experts. Prices start at Dhs300 per head (food only), between 7pm-11pm, call 04-2308580.



Subscribe & win!

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12 ISSUES FOR JUST Dhs120

Plus: Automatic Food Club Premium membership with exclusive offers and benefits

Each month, *BBC Good Food ME* brings you fresh, fabulous recipes and a host of foodie news and features, so you don't want to miss an issue! It's a world-class magazine at a local price. Subscribe to have the magazine delivered at your doorstep – you can save over 30%! Plus, you will get automatic membership to our Food Club and access to exclusive events and offers.

Join us at the Life & Style show in Abu Dhabi. Everyone who signs up for a subscription at the show is entered into a raffle draw to win one of two amazing gourmet holidays!



✳**Win! Safari holiday for two at Gondwana Game Reserve**
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✳**Win! A luxe city break at the Halkin by Como London**
Prize includes two-night stay, with breakfast and dinner at award-winning Basque restaurant, Ametsa.

BBC Good Food ME stand is in the Home & Living section.
Event details on p104. See you there!

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BBC GoodFood MIDDLE EAST

In next month's issue

Healthy eating made easy!

- Feel-good food
- Lighter desserts
- Weightloss tips from experts

PLUS



✳ Seafood suppers



✳ Gluten-free baking



✳ Ways to up your fruit and veg intake



✳ All-day diet plan

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Enjoy discounts at Brio all-day dining Restaurant, Splash pool bar, and Courtyard cafe.

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This corniche hotel's outlets are Sevilla, Azur, Café Mozart, Black Pearl Bazar, Enigma, Wanasah and Al Manzil.

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www.danathotels.com



DANAT AL AIN RESORT
Sevilla, Azur, Café Mozart, Black Pearl Bar, Enigma, La Piscine Poolbar & Restaurant, Al Manzil Clubhouse and Wanasah.

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The beach resort's outlets include Tides, Zaitoun, C View café, Latitude bar and Waves.

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WIN!

A luxurious weekend break for two at **Le Meridien Abu Dhabi**, worth **Dhs7,500**

One lucky winner and a guest can win a relaxing two night stay at the luxurious presidential suite of this city hotel, with breakfast and dinner, plus complimentary spa access.

Escape the festive season frenzy with a getaway for two at Le Meridien Hotel Abu Dhabi, which is located close to the capital's historical area, exhibition centres and shopping malls. A private beach, lush green surroundings with walkways – perfect for a walk after lunch or dinner – the Eden Spa, a haven for those who want to destress and indulge in a soothing spa treatment, and a selection of restaurants at the Le Meridien Village, make this resort the perfect destination for couples.

One lucky winner and a guest can escape to this resort to stay at the presidential suite, enjoy international dishes from the buffet for breakfast and dinner at La Brasserie, and get complimentary access to Eden Spa facilities.

Log on bbcgoodfoodme.com to enter this competition and simply answer this question:

What is the name of the casual dining restaurant at Le Meridien Hotel Abu Dhabi?

Scan this QR code to go straight to our website.

*Terms & conditions apply. Employees of CPI Media Group are not eligible to enter. Winners will be selected on random basis from correct entries.

Competitions

Fabulous prizes, from dining vouchers to event passes, up for grabs.

WIN! WEEKEND STAY AND BREAKFAST FOR TWO AT DANAT JEBEL DHANNA RESORT, WORTH OVER DHS1,600.

One lucky winner and a guest can win a getaway to this beach resort in Abu Dhabi. The package includes a stay and buffet breakfast at Tides Restaurant – it's the perfect escape for couples!



WIN! BRUNCH FOR FOUR AT PURE SKY LOUNGE, HILTON DUBAI JUMEIRAH RESIDENCES, WORTH DHS1,400.

Take three friends along to this sunset brunch held on the 35th floor of the hotel, and feast on salads, a platter of starters, meats from the grill, a selection of tempting desserts and selected beverages. It's the ideal way to spend a weekend afternoon.





WIN! VOUCHERS FROM KOFFEECAKE CORNER, WORTH DHS1,000.

Four lucky winners can visit the newly opened Koffeecake Corner at Downtown Burj Khalifa armed with Dhs250 vouchers each, to spend on their signature New York-style dishes. Try the wholewheat breakfast bagels, homemade granola, chocolate pizza and fondue, low-fat yoghurt frappes and hand-scooped mikshakes.

WIN! DINING VOUCHERS FROM STEAK BAR, DIFC, WORTH DHS500 EACH

Two lucky winners can take a guest to this eatery which serves USDA Prime Grade, 100 per cent Black Angus beef, as well as special cuts of dry aged beef. The restaurant is open for breakfast as well, so you can enjoy a meaty morning too, if you like!





WIN! DINING VOUCHER FROM SHADES, THE ADDRESS DUBAI MARINA, WORTH OVER DHS200.

One winner and a friend can head to this lounge restaurant to try the Spanish summer flavours for dinner, where they can indulge in Spanish paella served three ways: chicken, seafood, or mixed. Get ready to feast on one of Spain's most traditional specialties!

WIN! GIFT HAMPERS FROM CANDYLICIOUS, WORTH DHS500 EACH.

Two lucky winners can win a hamper filled with an assortment of gourmet chocolates, candy and other sweet treats that are just the thing to make the festive season even sweeter.



DOHA competition

WIN! FAMILY BRUNCH AT MOVENPICK DOHA, WORTH QR350

One winner can head to this International buffet, along with a plus one and two kids, to feast on an assortment of appetisers and desserts, fresh seafood and sushi, and dishes from live cooking stations. Children can play games, jump around the bouncy castle and tuck into popcorn, candy floss and cupcakes, while the adults relish their food.



To stand a chance to win these prizes, visit our competitions page on www.bbcgoodfoodme.com, or simply scan this QR code with your mobile to go directly to the website, and answer the simple questions.

*Terms & conditions apply. Employees of CPI Media Group and entrants below 21 years old are not eligible to enter. Winners will be selected on random basis from correct entries.


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Meet the blogger

Helping you connect to the UAE'S foodie community, one blog post at a time.

DEBBIE ROGERS, a British expat living in Tecom, Dubai, for the last five years is a popular name in the blogosphere and has gained fame through her blog, Coffee Cakes and Running. The 46-year old loves food and anything associated with it, whether it's dining out, entertaining at home or shopping for groceries. Apart from food, Debbie is also a fitness enthusiast (as her blog suggests), an adventurer – she climbed Mount Kilimanjaro last year – and loves travelling.



Festive traditions

My Christmas planning begins in October, with pickling of onions and red cabbage. Closer to the big day I bake quiches, roast the ham and prepare vegetables so that I can relax and enjoy the celebration.

Five pantry staples

Potatoes, onions, eggs, coffee and milk.

Snack attack

I could eat deli cold cuts of meat and salmon anytime of the day.

About the blog

Coffeecakesandrunning.me began in 2011, after I had two major surgeries and was housebound for four months. It began as a project, but I soon found myself writing about subjects I was passionate about, such as food, exercise and my weight-loss journey. Over time, I started including baking, cooking and travel adventure sections as well. To be honest, I didn't think anyone was reading my blog and was thrilled to find out later that people do! Those looking for heartfelt stories on weight loss, dishes from various cuisines and restaurant reviews will enjoy reading and finding out about my journey and experiences in Dubai.

Piece of advice

Bulk cooking and leftovers are the new fast food! If you cook in bulk and freeze meals ahead, or give leftovers a twist the next day, it not only helps you save time, but allows you to be a frugal cook and cut down on food wastage too.

"I love coffee! Whether it's a skinny latte, cappuccino or just black coffee poured over ice cream to make an affogato."

Favourite cuisine

Indian – for its variety.

On my Christmas wish list

A foodie hamper or a Thermomix.

Foodie inspiration

I spend a lot of time flicking through cookbooks in Kinokuniya, Dubai Mall. I also tear pages from food magazines and have the Food Network channel running in the background at all times.

Food for thought

I'm currently learning and researching about the Slow Food Moment through *Slow Food Nation: Why Our Food Should be Good, Clean and Far* by Carlo Petrini (Rizzoli Ex Libris). The book basically advises readers on how to live a healthy life in a fast paced world. Much of the food section in the book takes me back to memories of childhood family events, with the celebration of food and communal dinners playing a big role in our family life. Back then we bought fresh fruit and vegetables from the shops and meat from the butchers. All meals were prepared from scratch which took time, effort and love.



This Christmas, I'll be indulging in

A Buche de Noel (yule log) or a white chocolate log made with citrus and white chocolate ganache. I'm not a big fan of heavy fruit-based Christmas puddings, so this is a great alternative.

Text by NICOLA MONTEATH | Photographs SUPPLIED



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